THE TIMES

LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

75th Year

AUGUST 20 1976

3,884

T·L·S

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

FRIDAY ◆ AUGUST 27 1976 ◆ No 3,885 ◆ 14p

The radical professoriat, by Steven Marcus

Prime ministerial manners: Asquith & Melbourne

On the track of B. Traven

The art and life of Mervyn Peake

Two Puritan poets, by Anne Stevenson

The Lambs in their letters

Interpreting the jellyfish

"Il est innocent!" Félix-Jules Méline, French Prime Minister from 1895 to 1898, whose ministry fell because he refused to reopen the question of the innocence of Dreyfus. This lithograph is by the Swiss-born artist Félix Vallotton (1865-1925), one of an album of twelve by various artists in homage to Picquart, who successfully defended Dreyfus at the re-trial in 1899. It is included in the touring exhibition of Vallotton's graphics—little known outside France and Switzerland—presented by the Arts Council and the Pro Helvetia Foundation, at present in Bolton and reaching the Courtauld Institute Galleries in London next spring. The catalogue is by MaryAnn Stevens and Ashley St James (72pp. £1).

FICTION

Anthony Quinton on the novels of P. M. Hubbard

Germaine Greer on the latest Great Feminist Novel

The revision of the *STC*

A syllabus for radicals

By Steven Marcus

RICHARD OHMANN:
English in America
346pp. Oxford University Press. £11.75 (paperback, £2.95).

English in America is about a profession, "the teaching and study of language and literature in America", in particular about the ways in which the English language and English literature are taught and studied in colleges and universities at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. It is largely about certain essentially academic institutions that have to do with "the transmission of literacy and culture". It consists of a number of loosely connected essays on a variety of topics—such as the Modern Language Association of America, Advanced Placement examinations, Freshman Composition and the Military-Industrial Complex, the Professional Ethos of English Departments, and Knowledge and Technology. The earliest of these pieces was written in the mid-1960s, and most of them bear the markings of the experience of the crisis-laden years that followed.

Richard Ohmann was one of those numerous American academics who was, as they say, "radicalized" by the Vietnam War and the other upheavals and events that went along with it in America. For Professor Ohmann, unlike many others, the "radicalization" has persisted, and those essays and the arguments they contain are, as he himself remarks, "a specimen of the literature of conversion". Hence *English in America* is very much a period piece, a view of parts of the world from a perspective that was fairly widespread in American university culture a few years ago but seems oddly deficient and inapplicable—perhaps even irrelevant—today. It is full of good intentions, most of which end up as spilt milk.

That perspective seemed dubious in the very years when it enjoyed the widest currency. Professor Ohmann was one of those who in 1968 formed a radical caucus whose purpose was to take over power in the MLA. The general context of these activities was, of course, protest against the intolerable war in Vietnam, but even at the time there was something quaint and unreal about the undertaking. There was a good deal of clucking and utterances of shock and outrage among those members of the professoriat who disagreed with Professor Ohmann and his colleagues, but that was quaint as well. It was almost as if someone had mounted a coup against the Dickens Society of Philadelphia. Or as if the CIA had organized a putsch of the Communist Party of the United States at a time when more than half the members were undercover agents of the FBI. When the dryasdust settled, the successful takeover was generally recognized as having amounted to almost nothing. A characteristic displacement had occurred. Energies of political protest were finding expression in means that virtually guaranteed their nullification. But this pseudo-politics was itself founded on an anterior misapprehension—a belief that an organization like the MLA is a "meritocracy" or that it is "the intellectual center of the profession" or that it merits being taken over.

Professor Ohmann's other arguments and essays leave behind the similar impression that one is in the wrong ball park. He is, for example, against the Advanced Placement examinations that a small minority of American high school students take and pass in order to achieve advanced standing in one or more subjects when they enter college. He is against them because they are elitist and hierarchical, and because "the idea of stratification" is endorsed by them. He is also against them because they ratify the values and assumptions of the middle class. The implicit message of the Advanced Placement English course to the aspiring high-school student, he observes, is: "Your feeling about the poem is important . . . only as the outcome of careful reading." Careful reading, apparently, is a generic bourgeois virtue or capacity. Moreover, these courses also mischievously assume that there are "skills and competencies" that can be "mastered" and even "transmitted", and that "orderliness" has a certain value; and their covert idea is that literature ought to be read and taught in such a way that "middle-class assumptions" will not be abraded, "even when the literature means to do so". Since the writers recommended by the Advanced Placement pamphlet that Professor Ohmann is criticizing include Blake, Byron, Shaw, Lawrence and Orwell, the middle-class characters who assembled these courses seem to have put themselves to a good deal of unnecessary trouble. Consider how much wasteful debrasionary exercise they have let students and teachers in for. Sample question: "Is the proverb 'The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom' is not altogether at odds with the value of orderliness. Argue this assertion pro and con."

Professor Ohmann is not detained by such inner contradictions—as certain radicals used to say—but moves sturdily toward his conclusions:

> I used to wonder why it is that society pays English teachers so much money to do by and large what is fun: teaching fine literature. I now think our function is extremely valuable; namely, to insure the harmlessness of all culture; to make it serve and preserve the status quo.

Fun? Fine—strong, precise diction. And then there is the refreshing simplicity—or is it the reductionist cant—of the "status quo". Never mind, Professor Ohmann knows what he is driving at:

> We should understand what we are up against: not tests that are arbitrary, but a class society that requires such tests. No attack on these rites of passage can be finally successful unless it overturns bourgeois culture, itself, and the rule of our dominant classes.

What seems to have happened is that sometime in the mid-1960s Richard Ohmann discovered that he was actually living in a society; he also made the even more alarming discovery that he was a member of a privileged middle class. And he discovered as well that institutions of education have something to do with the functioning of social and cultural reproduction. I have quoted him as saying that this book is a specimen of the literature of conversion. It is, and Professor Ohmann belongs to a category of the religious that was overlooked by William James—he is a member of the just-born. He has an extraordinary knack of being continually surprised by the self-evident. Well, perhaps better late than never.

Since it's going to be a long night until hell freezes over, it is reasonable to ask what intermediate proposals Professor Ohmann has while we all await the millennium. The answers, dimly hinted at in the foregoing passage, begin to emerge in an essay entitled "Freshman Composition and Administered Thought". Professor Ohmann sees the profession as afflicted with "corporate cynicism toward composition". A diagnosis that I can only say does not correspond with my own limited experience. He reviews a series of textbooks that were designed for use in freshman composition classes and finds, not surprisingly, that they are not very inspiring. The student in freshman composition, he observes, is "in plain fact serving time, doing what the instructor requires, and submitting—if not to an indignity, then at least to a discipline". This is bad. Professor Ohmann would like freshman students to be "free, critical, and creative in a situation where society was asking them to be of service, docile, and limited". (We may observe how "the instructor" has dropped out and been, without mediation, abstractly universalized into "society".) The fundamental presupposition in composition textbooks and in the courses themselves is that "composition helps students get ahead in society and also helps preserve society itself in its American form". This is, in a long-term disservice, it it helps to too. And what is wrong with composition textbooks is that they "operate without a stated analysis of literacy in technological society and without a politics". They try, with more or less success, to instruct students in means of rational argument and persuasion and in such modes of organization as "illustration, comparison and contrast, analogy, classification, process, and cause and effect". These qualities are, apparently, bourgeois virtues again, because the students who master them are qualified to become "Organization Men", and the men who made and supported the Vietnam War tried by such means and modes to persuade themselves and others that they were doing the right thing. Furthermore, when an instructor suggests to a student that one idiom or usage is preferable to another he is "teaching language in a way that preserves class lines".

Professor Ohmann thinks of the job of teaching freshman English as "disciplining young people in spirit and in verbal skills", and seems to regard it as rather a trifling business, since it "could be done by schoolmasters (or even by machines?)". The first do not exist in America; the second do not exist anywhere. He thinks of it as "tutoring the young in verbal manners", and at another point describes it as "our regimen of verbal and logical graces" to which the student has to submit. Nevertheless, despite the conservatism of the profession, there has been some change. Responding to pressures from "minority groups . . . from disaffected faculty" and from other forces "outside the department", curricula have been modified: "The MLA found, in response to questionnaires, that by 1971, 'over 40 per cent of the four-year colleges and universities had reduced or removed their English and foreign language requirements for graduation'." This is a development that Professor Ohmann devoutly affirms.

I find it difficult to know where to begin discussing this collection of tendentiousness and claptrap. Over 40 per cent of American youth enter into the system of higher education. They enter into it at different levels and kinds of institutions: into community colleges, into four-year state colleges or four-year private liberal arts colleges, into and great state universities or the great elite private universities with their undergraduate university colleges. It is no dark or closely held secret that the vast majority of these students are in effect functionally illiterate; the depth and degree of illiteracy vary at different levels of the system of higher education, but it exists pervasively, even at the elite undergraduate institutions. What we are confronted with in higher education in America is a situation of mass functional illiteracy. The situation itself is not entirely new, but the scale is unprecedented. Why this should be so is a subject too complex to be gone into here, but one of the contributing circumstances has to do with the character of secondary education in America; as far as English and the humanities are concerned it is non-functioned, *il n'existe pas*. This has been so for a long time, and there is nothing to indicate that substantive change is in the offing. Hence one of the historic functions of the first two years of higher education in America has been and remains reparative.

Professor Ohmann considers himself a radical, and it seems to me that about the most radical thing that he, or any other instructor of English, can do is to try to make sure that his students really learn how to read and write. How else are they to find their bearings in a difficult, dangerous, and corrupt world; how else will they be enabled to deal with a mystified society? How else are a critical spirit and a criticism of tradition to be kept alive? But then I find Professor Ohmann, in a related context, suggesting the following:

> Since our woes derive from the system's working all too well to serve those it serves, even an actual solution to a problem—if there is, there may be—is a long-term disservice. It helps to conceal the deeper causes of trouble to let the system continue its inhuman work less self-consciously.

Despite the uncertain disclaimer of that last clause, I find such a statement when it is applied to students and subjects contemptuous of both, and unacceptable in a teacher. A statement such as this—including the inevitable, unspecified "the system"—suggests to me that Professor Ohmann has been contaminated by the very disease that he is fighting. (Professor Ohmann is the editor of a journal called *College English*; in that capacity he has performed a useful service, although he does not do so in these essays.)

The classic, retrograde way of dealing with truancy in American schools used to be suspension of the truant student. The youngster's problem was that he did not spend enough time in school; the principal's solution to that problem was to keep him from going to school at all. Our students' major problem is that they do not know how to read or write; Professor Ohmann's solution is—what? He quotes approvingly someone's remark that "the subject of English in this country has been used to inculcate a white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant ethic. . . . My own feeling is that the game is just about played out". I suppose Professor Ohmann would substitute something "free, critical, and creative" for the poor, prejudiced, and class-bound thing we have now. Free—I hear the rattling of chains. Critical—in due course. Creative—that word used in this context prompts me to reach for my pea-shooter. In the name of "creativity" virtually every conceivable kind of debasing nonsense has been tried in American education. Max Weber's ascetic Calvinists look better all the time.

When it comes to the teaching of literature and the organization of English studies and departments, Professor Ohmann is not much more helpful. His major complaint is that the study and teaching of English literature have become excessively professionalized, and that in most important matters "English departments act to enhance the professional self-image of their members. . . . They serve the discipline and its traditions and respond to social change only within that framework". They act, in other words, as interest groups and are largely self-serving. True enough. But if that is what were principally amiss with English and the other humanities in America, we would all be sitting pretty. What is amiss is legion. The profession is full of mediocrities, and its intellectual standards are abysmal. Research and scholarship tend to be tightly compartmentalized, excessively and esoterically specialized, and more often than not are devoted to trivia. Knowledge is fragmented, and very little disciplinary takes place within different branches of the same discipline, let alone across disciplinary boundaries. Important issues of human affairs—with which literature may have something to do—tend not to get discussed, and the modernized disciplines have become academic, again in the old, deprecatory sense of the term. There are enough exceptions to these circumstances to prevent one from despairing, but the signs in general are not encouraging. Professor Ohmann says enough to indicate that he is aware of some of this, but he thinks that the problem is essentially political.

He thinks that it is essentially political and that the only solution is "socialist revolution". To propose this remedy as the way out of the difficulties of English in America is sufficiently loony as to be mildly amusing. To propose this remedy in the America of 1976 is indeed to offer a counsel of despair. Yet there is a crisis taking place in America, and Professor Ohmann's book is a symptom of it. That crisis is the beginning of the coming apart or decomposition of bourgeois culture—the version of it that we have had in America is better known as high culture. Professor Ohmann is a product of that culture, and he despises it—rather too easily, perhaps. On this issue he quotes Christopher Caudwell with approval: "Humanism, the creation of bourgeois culture, finally separates from it." It "must either pass into the ranks of the proletariat or, going quietly into a corner, cut its throat". I am not recommending that Professor Ohmann head for the nearest corner, but he really has nowhere to go. In this as in so much else he is exemplary. He has lost faith in bourgeois culture (the only one around, to be sure) and its values, and has almost nothing left to transmit. His humanism, on the strength of this book, is a pallid abstraction. And he may call for "socialist revolution" until the cows come home. His longing for "revolutionary change, with its idea of immersion in social process" by means of what he calls "deep politics" has a kind of special, awkward poignancy to it, as does his belief that he is teaching literature in a "discredited civilization". The early Marx's humanism, we may recall, was a project, not an accomplished thing. And we may recall as well that the later Marx remarked that not all of bourgeois culture was doomed to historical oblivion. Many of its values and achievements, he observed, represented permanent accessions for humanity.

Professor Ohmann also belongs to another tradition that is in decline. He teaches at Wesleyan University, an elite institution that offers undergraduate students whatever remains there of what used to be called a liberal or general education. Belief in the value and efficacy of that kind of education has been widely eroded in America, and undergraduate curricula are generally in a state of structural disrepair. Professor Ohmann is right—these institutions did produce ruling social and cultural elites; and sometimes they could be as arrogant and unfeeling as elites in more traditional societies. But at their best they represented a liberal elitism, and proposed the possibility that higher education had other purposes than turning out functionaries who would serve the institutional needs of the social world as it exists. Such an education gave young men and women space to turn around in and question the dominant social and cultural values of the world they were being prepared to enter. It fostered the growth of a spirit of intellectual and critical inquiry that did not previously exist on any sizable scale in America. Professor Ohmann knows this, as he knows where the centre of opposition to the war in Vietnam was, but he largely prefers to overlook it. Liberal education—in which English occupied a central place—was neither simply nor exclusively a scheme of the American middle and upper middle classes to perpetuate and reproduce themselves. It was also in part an effort of self-transcendence, just as the idea of socialism and the modernist movements in the arts and literature and thought were themselves largely bourgeois efforts of self-transcendence.

There was enough that was inadequate in both the conception and execution of this tradition of education (it was not monolithic and existed in many shapes and varieties) so that its passing need not be mourned with bitter tears. But it should be noted that something of value is almost surely on the way out. What seems to be taking its place, an undergraduate education much more closely directed toward vocational and socio-economic needs, is by no means a heartening development. If change continues along such lines, then universities in America may indeed become little more than the hothouses of organization men, the forcing beds of bureaucrats, manipulators, and social engineers, that Professor Ohmann thinks they already are.

I have said that this book is a period piece, an anachronism. The problems it addresses have been overtaken by history, which in America, at any rate consumes everything with a peculiarly voracious celerity. Professor Ohmann is aware of this circumstance and acknowledges it here and there. But there is nothing he can do about it, and, since he is an honest man, he sticks to his polemical guns, even though they are now pointing in the wrong direction. For what has happened is that a large new crisis has begun to overtake higher education in America. As a result of demographic changes, shifts in the world and national economies, and alterations in national policy on social priorities, higher education in America is at present undergoing the functional equivalent of a depression. The surgical slashings have not been distributed evenly, and there is no telling when or where it is going to end. I am not setting up shop as a prophet, but if the ruination that has been visited this year upon the City University of New York is anything of a portent, if it is as some anticipate the tip of the iceberg, then we are all in for hard times.

English in America is the by-product of a period of luxury living in the academy. Its unhappy fortune was to be published out of its time, and such a time is not likely to return in a hurry. Nevertheless, I do not want to close on a gloomy note, and in point of fact I am not gloomy. In the midst of another bad spell, the era of Senator Joe McCarthy, Philip Rahv remarked: "Nothing can last in America more than ten years. McCarthy will soon be finished." There is enough experience packed into that querulous, sour paradox to recall us to our complex fate. The study and teaching of English in America are part of that complex fate: whether the fate is also fatal, time alone will tell.

Boy Jesus

When they made me the boy Jesus
In the Sunday school Christmas pageant, oh Jesus,
I would have given almost anything
To be anybody else in the world but a made-up Jesus.

But suddenly it was too late to say anything
Polite against it or do anything
Desperate in my knee-length toga, while my squirming friends
Snickered in the pews, or even feel anything

As I floated down the endless aisle, praying those friends
Would forget someday and be real friends
And not remember me forever singing that damned song
In a shaky soprano, "All Men Be Loving Friends."

It would have been terrible enough singing any song
In public, even the school fight song,
But to have to look so holy-faced and fluttery while I,
Of all young sinners, sang it, made it my swan song.

Why had they picked on me? Jesus and I
Gave each other a pain: I couldn't stump preachers, could I?
No dove had come flapping down when I was baptized, I was no boy
Genius, and we were Laurel and Hardy carpenters, my father and I.

And my voice was breaking: I was only half a boy
A sneak-thief, liar, prober of loveless keyholes, a would-be boy
Magician, a card-stacker more ruled by swear-words
Than by Jesus Christ Almighty, the Good Boy.

From that day on, I put my fidgety faith in my own words
And later in love—in ugly, profane, beautiful words,
Instead of going hook, line, and sinker for Jesus—
No Gospels for the Fishers of Men, but love in other words.

David Wagoner

Partisan procedures

By John D. Lees

AUSTIN RANNEY:
Curing the Mischiefs of Faction
Party Reform in America
218pp. University of California Press. £4.65.

Foreign observers of the major political parties in the United States often emphasize how different they are from their counterparts in other Western societies. Ambivalent about their virtues, they have not been lacking in suggestions for reform. What is perhaps more surprising is a similar ambivalence among Americans about the very existence of political parties, and an even greater propensity to inflict on them a variety of reforms. Moreover, such reform demands have often come from within the parties.

It is to the subject of the theory and practice of party reform in the United States that Austin Ranney addresses himself in *Curing the Mischiefs of Faction*, an expanded version of the Jefferson Memorial lectures given in 1973 at Berkeley. Professor Ranney has impeccable credentials—long-time scholar of intra-party behaviour in Britain and the United States, political science professor at the University of Wisconsin (the state which was the crucible of party reform at the beginning of this century, adopting the first mandatory direct party primary law), and member of the McGovern-Fraser commission (1969-72) responsible for effecting radical reforms within the Democratic Party during the most recent epoch of party change.

As an account of the fundamental, recurring issues of party reform, and the distinctive periods of major reform, the study is valuable and timely. Not the least it is a forcible reminder of the central facts of life for political parties in the United States. They operate within an institutional structure which makes cohesion difficult, and in an environment where political leaders and activists are often uneasy about the necessity and desirability of partisan organization.

This paradox of anti-partisan principle and partisan activity is exemplified in the success of James Madison in combining principled scepticism about parties with effective work as the first great party organizer. Also, Robert La Follette combined anti-party rhetoric with skilled factional in-fighting to win control of an established state party. It is reflected also in party reform demands which have centred around differences over three questions—should parties be treated as public agencies or private associations, what should parties do or not do and who should parties do or not do, and who should party decisions? The lessons of party reform, whether initiated internally or externally, are that changes often have effects very different from those intended.

It is the practical implications of this perceptive analysis that Professor Ranney does not develop fully. This may be because he himself epitomizes, through participation in recent Democratic reform activities, the self-destructive tendencies of many party activists in the United States—in particular, the witting or unwitting failure to differentiate between decisions made within the party which are essentially matters for party members (where democratic norms need not, indeed perhaps should not, be applied too literally), and controls on party activity at elections, where democratic accountability may indeed be important.

Professor Ranney discusses the problems of intra-party controls in what is the most original section of the study, outlining the difficulties in defining who is a party member, the degree to which the national party should control party activity at all levels. He points out also that rules imposed by governments do affect intra-party procedures.

The weak nature of American national parties, whether this be a blessing or a curse, may indeed be a consequence of the lack of faith by party leaders and activists in the legitimacy of their own national organizations and their internal procedures. Such attitudes are surely critical in affecting party performance. Party reform activities based on confused, perhaps spurious, notions of representation or democracy have become preferable goals for many Democrats to the more difficult task of creating a national party able to win presidential elections while remaining responsive to rank and file pressures in support of particular candidates and policies. As Professor Ranney suggests, more democratic parties are not thereby better instruments of democratic government.

Professor Ranney gives insufficient attention to the inconsistencies of self-imposed party reforms, or to the danger that a preoccupation with intra-party purity may decrease rather than increase voter support for both major parties. National political parties in the United States have always been weak. Today they cannot afford to lose voter interest and support to other forms of political activity. The real weakness of the national parties may be that they remain labelled bottles, empty of content, vulnerable to whoever possesses the personal organization, finance and stamina to take them over. Goldwater, Nixon and McGovern are all unhappy precedents—by the end of 1976 the list may be even longer.

A Roman among Liberals

By Peter Clarke

STEPHEN KOSS: *Asquith*
310pp. Allen Lane. £6.95.

CHRIS COOK: *A Short History of the Liberal Party, 1900-1976*
179pp. Macmillan. £6.95.

No family has been more closely associated with the fortunes of the twentieth-century Liberal Party than that of Herbert Henry Asquith. He himself led it for nearly twenty years, during which time, it must be said, it suffered catastrophic reverses. His daughter, best known as Lady Violet Bonham Carter, watched over its subsequent difficulties with much the same mixture of rueful impotence and faintly absurd proprietorial melancholy with which Toni Buddenbrooks observed the decline of her family. Within the past twenty years, her son Mark and her son-in-law Jo Grimond helped to light beacons of revival which she lived to see. To the end she was the jealous guardian of the Asquith tradition.

And yet Asquith's standing today might have been higher had more disinterested reassessment been allowed free play earlier. As it is, his reputation is in eclipse. In 1916 Asquith was replaced as Prime Minister by Lloyd George. The rift between them was institutionalized in the disruption of the Liberal Party. By the time the dust settled in the 1920s, Asquith and Lloyd George were both in the wilderness and Labour had filled the Liberal's former role as a governing party. There was plenty of fuel here to keep the animosities burning. On the personal rivalry between them, so it seemed, hinged the destruction of their party. To most contemporaries, therefore, a favourable assessment of one implied an unfavourable view of the other. Historians have taken their cue accordingly. The high tide for Asquith came with the biography which Roy Jenkins published in 1964. It was an elegant and well-researched book, running to over 500 pages, which, while it did not wholly satisfy Lady Violet, gave wide currency to a sympathetic view of its subject. But thereafter the literature has been dominated by an overdue rehabilitation of the political creativity of Lloyd George. In this reappraisal of his mercurial qualities, the murmoral image of Asquith has fallen into disrepute.

But the time is surely now past when our estimation of them need vary inversely in this way. In the first place, it is now possible to set their careers more clearly and dispassionately against a growing scholarly literature on the period. The great strength of Stephen Koss's excellent new biography lies in its ability to seize this opportunity. And in the second place, it is now apparent that the decline of the Liberal Party was not merely the consequence of a leadership struggle but the result of more complex historical processes. This is where Chris Cook's *A Short History of the Liberal Party 1900-1976* ought to be of most help.

Unfortunately, however, this is not so much a short history as a skeleton history of the Liberal Party. For much of its length it is a rather bare recital of dates and facts. Moreover, some of those are incorrect, which makes its use as a work of reference rather hazardous. This applies particularly to the material on electoral history, on which the author has claim to a special competence, having published an interesting monograph on political realignments in the 1920s. More care should have been taken here; and indeed there is an unfortunate air of haste about the composition of the book as a whole. Only in the last chapter, which breathlessly retails the outcome of the Norman Scott affair, does this have an obvious excuse. One expects in a work of summary that a considered synthesis of scholarly findings and interpretations would be attempted. The students at whom this book is aimed ought at least to be made familiar with the general arguments which have been developed, even if they cannot, for reasons of space, be given the full supporting evidence.

Only in its treatment of the inter-war years does this book adequately fulfil such a commission. In these chapters we are given a well-rounded account of the predicament of the Liberal Party, confronted with a rising challenge from Labour. The electoral collapse of Liberalism is tellingly demonstrated and the point is firmly established that after the formation of the first MacDonald government in 1924 the Liberal Party was bereft of a convincing political role. Mr Cook is strongly critical of the Liberal leaders' decision to put Labour in office at this juncture, seeing that such unfavourable consequences ensued. But here the Liberals were prisoners of their own ethic. They had no intention of showing themselves a bourgeois party by keeping Labour out. Goodwill, not class conflict, was their answer to working-class grievances. And so they could hardly believe it when their own goodwill was not reciprocated (or indeed credited) by the Labour Party, which showed a single-minded determination to give the destructive lead of its rival on the left a higher priority than the search for a progressive consensus. Professor Koss sees the difficulty of the position more clearly and, although he is often understandably critical of Asquith's post-war career, this is not an episode for which he arraigns him.

By this time the Liberal Party had all too little freedom for manoeuvre and Labour, by contrast, had a far more solid and effective electoral base. The increasing polarization of politics on lines of class squeezed the Liberals out in the end. But how far this was an inevitable development remains disputable. For class had already clearly emerged as the bedrock of voter alignments in the pre-war period, yet at this stage the Liberals had been able to benefit from the process. Labour was apparently contained within a progressive alliance of just the kind that later proved impracticable. It was only after 1916 that Labour made an effective independent bid for power—and did so at a time when Asquith and Lloyd George had obligingly dealt the Liberal Party a series of stunning blows. It remains true, therefore, that much turns on the way in which Asquith's eight years as Prime Minister came to end in such disarray.

The Asquith who emerges from Professor Koss's biography is a complex personality who keeps some of his secrets. The author resists the temptation to summarize his achievements and failings in any cut-and-dried fashion. Indeed, one of the difficulties with Asquith has been the tendency to extrapolate a comprehensive view of the man from one phase of a career unusual for its vicissitudes. It is easy enough to pile up the paradoxes. Asquith came from Yorkshire nonconformist stock, he was a scholarship boy, a self-made man; he became the embodiment of a patrician political style, took to London society, to bridge and to drink.

As a backbencher he was the leading hope of the progressive wing of the Liberal Party and when in high office was responsible for innovations in social and economic policy which many considered revolutionary; yet he was deeply conservative by temperament, with an unimaginative and often legalistic cast of mind. He was a Liberal Imperialist and took Britain into the First World War; he became the champion of many radicals who mistrusted militarism, conscription and power politics. His relations with most of his colleagues were purely formal and his manner often seemed constrained by a Victorian reserve; yet he could be relaxed and frivolous in the company of the young and he depended on sentimental and somewhat indiscreet friendships with women half his age.

In part these conflicting images are those of past and present. A sterner, younger Asquith gave way to a more indulgent older man. As Keynes put it, "the somewhat tight features, the alleged coldness of the aspiring lawyer from Balliol, were entirely transformed in the noble Roman of the war and post-war years, who looked the part of Prime Minister as no one has since Mr Gladstone".

Professor Koss has dissected the palimpsest with care and presented his findings with lucidity. The triumphs of Asquith's early career are shown to be the result of ability, ambition, and also a certain austerity which he later lost. In this respect his second marriage, to Margot Tennant, is clearly relevant, but the author sensibly cautions us against seeing this as simply the cause of a new departure. It gave Asquith a kind of relaxation which he obviously wanted, but it raises too the familiar question of whether "the aristocratic embrace" is apt to smother ministerial radicalism. "Asquith is an Asquith: he is a fine fellow, an honest man and a sincere Liberal," thought Campbell-Bannerman, "But Asquith *cum* Margot is a lost soul."

Although Asquith was identified as a Liberal Imperialist at the turn of the century he took no step which would mark a more permanent breach with the official Liberal Party. He followed a course better calculated to ensure him the reversion to the leadership than to further any strident doctrine of Empire. There was no real obstacle to his taking office under Campbell-Bannerman, and as Chancellor of the Exchequer he carved out an unchallenged position as heir apparent. His work here quietly laid the essential groundwork for the more flamboyant initiatives which Lloyd George took as his successor. (In some matters the same was to be true of their respective work as wartime prime ministers.) The nature of the pre-war partnership between Asquith and Lloyd George is brought out well. Each realized that the other had qualities lacking in himself. This made for mutual respect and fruitful cooperation which lasted until the formation of the first coalition in 1915.

As a historian, Professor Koss is, to the end of his fingertips, a master of political manoeuvre and a connoisseur of intrigue. He can summon the relevant sources to his aid with an aplomb which few can challenge. Although *Asquith* has no footnotes, allusions in the text and a series of bibliographical notes to each chapter make clear enough the secure basis on which it is built. Some may think that he has on occasion been carried away by his own versatility. The making and unmaking of governments is for him the stuff of politics. The examination of the formation of Campbell-Bannerman's administration in 1905 seems over-long in a book of this kind. Elsewhere, the demise of the Liberal Government in 1915 is treated with a concern for detail not easy to sustain without references. Here, however, it must be acknowledged that the author has important general claims to make, believing as he does that the formation of the first coalition stemmed from a conspiracy in which Winston Churchill was prominent, and that (following A. J. P. Taylor) it marked an equilibration between the forces of freedom and control.

By 1915-16 it seemed that Lloyd George offered a more vigorous and resolute approach to the problems of war than Asquith, whose support came to rest increasingly on those Liberals who were afraid of something worse. After Asquith had used the arts of prevarication and dissimulation to usher in conscription in April 1916, he became expendable.

Those who were impatient to win the war at all costs were by now natural supporters of Lloyd George. Asquith's followers were more scrupulous, more diffident, more fastidious. It would be going too far to say that Asquith vindicated his Liberalism by showing himself ready to lose the war. But there is certainly no need to invoke a dishonourable plot to explain his fall from power; nor to blame the Asquithians unduly for their admittedly hobbled defence of what they understood as Liberal principles under the Lloyd George government.

In these respects a biographer of the present day is at a better vantage point to offer a balanced judgment than earlier writers who felt themselves compelled to attack or defend. Asquith does not come out particularly well from the trying wartime years. The price he paid—personal, political and financial—is fully apparent in this account. And the last phase of his career receives here fuller and more convincing attention than in any previous work. There are many respects in which Roy Jenkins's biography will continue to fill a distinguished role; but for a fresh generation of students and other readers, this new study will offer the most accessible and authoritative introduction to a career of pivotal importance in the evolution of modern British politics.

On board the Admiralty Yacht "Enchantress"
Mr Winston Churchill: "Any home news?"
Mr Asquith: "How can there be with you here?"

A Punch cartoon of 1913 from Lady Violet Bonham Carter's Winston Churchill As I Know Him *(Eyre and Spottiswoode/Collins, 1965).*

POSTAGE: INLAND 9p ABROAD 7p

SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, N.Y. AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT, PUBLISHED BY THE TIMES PUBLISHING CO. INC., 201 EAST 42ND STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017.

The pensive anti-Tory

By Roger Fulford

PHILIP ZIEGLER: *Melbourne*
412pp. Collins. £6.50.

Reading this biography, which is a first-class addition to political history, our public men might understandably feel that of all our Prime Ministers Melbourne is the most to be envied—the head of a government whom every minister should wish to be. For this there are two particular reasons. He was twice Prime Minister—for a few months in 1834 and then for six years from April 1835—a good spell when set against his predecessors and successors—and a spell not marked by issues of immense consequence. When we look ahead to the battles over the Corn Laws, the Crimean War and Home Rule we can produce nothing more exciting in Melbourne's time than West Indian sugar, church rates, scrappy additions to the Reform Bill or the Municipal Corporation Bill. How much to be envied was a parliamentary session with such preoccupations rather than with the ever-lasting crises of a later age which were well described by Palmerston as "events moving at a hand-gallop". Although it does not invalidate the point made above, one word has fairly to be made.

The politics of the 1830s look confusingly little in us but we were not there and we cannot tell. Queen Victoria repeatedly laments that towards the end of his time in office, Melbourne looked tired and the explanation perhaps is that when the world of affairs is unexciting ministers grow quarrelsome. And it was in reference to this that Melbourne said "when one gets over one difficulty there always comes another". Philip Ziegler is fond of reminding us that when a reforming ministry runs out of steam its inertia leads to great difficulties; Gladstone in 1873 and Rosebery in 1894 are in point here. But it is also true that office may smother reforming zeal.

Bees, on flowers alighting,
cease to hum
So, settling upon places,
Whigs grow dumb.

Moreover Melbourne's cabinet colleagues were much more independent than was thought proper in later political history. For example John Russell, who was a loyal but difficult colleague, clung to the continuation of parliamentary reform and was guilty of the mistake defined by Lord Salisbury as "the commonest error in politics" namely to stick to "the carcases of dead policies". Lord Melbourne's cabinet could fairly be described as a group of disunited men in search of a policy. For all the outward peace and quiet these were the difficulties below the surface and they called for all the skill and judgment of which Melbourne was unquestionably the master.

The other reason why Melbourne, among all our Prime Ministers, should be envied was that the office never obliterated the man. He was himself first and always; secondly he was Prime Minister. His "pensive and solitary mind" shines across the decades with increasing force and charm. The picture which emerges from the queen's journal and also from scraps recalled by his political contemporaries is at times reminiscent of Johnson. Their similarities are obvious, and it might be a fascinating waste of time to compile an examination paper inviting competitors to say which aphorism belongs to which man. Here is Melbourne on rowing: "I do not like any pleasure which is drudgery; why you might as well dig." Possibly the statesman can be identified by his habit of enforcing what he is saying by a personal comparisons. He disliked the singing of birds "because it is so shrill" and he thought it very odd that Fox liked it but could not bear music or the sound of the human voice. He told Queen Victoria that Johnson showed deep feeling and great knowledge of human nature. "What he said was superior to what he wrote. Might we not also say of Melbourne that what he said was superior to what he placed on the statute book?"

In private life he was curiously reckless and happy-go-lucky. His relations with Lady Brandon is a tangle which led to divorce proceedings. Illustrate this. He met his lady when he was Chief Secretary at the end of the 1820s; her husband had been a lax clergyman before he succeeded to the peerage. Mr Ziegler has seen the two hundred letters which he wrote to her between 1828 and 1832 and rightly decides that this lady meant far more to him than is often supposed. (In these letters he shows a rather unpleasant fancy for whipping—"a few twigs of a birch applied to the naked skin of a young lady produces with very little effort a very considerable sensation"). In 1828 Brandon brought an action against Melbourne alleging seduction of his wife—possibly prompted as Creevey suggests by the chief secretary's refusal to put his name forward for a bishopric. Melbourne bought off Brandon and the suit failed. Whether he deserved this good fortune is uncertain but he was certainly guilty of the grossest indiscretion. He and his family paid Lady Branden £1,000 a year which she lived to enjoy till 1862 in the balmy surroundings of Torquay.

He also rode roughshod over public opinion in his choice of a private secretary. He had a perfectly good Treasury official—George Anson who subsequently was secretary to Prince Albert—but he also employed a bounder called Tom Young—known as Ubiquity Young because he was to be seen everywhere. He had been a ship's purser and Greville said that he was infernally vulgar and familiar. Perhaps Melbourne caught a little of his secretary's vulgarity when he said: "Through him I am able to look down below; which for me is more important than all I can learn from the fine gentlemen clerks about me." An indiscretion of Young's—at the time of the Reform Bill he had written to a group of reformers in Birmingham that they should be prepared to arm themselves—was thought to have cost at the end of Melbourne's life, greatly distressed him and is thought to have hastened his death.

Undoubtedly Melbourne's reputation was damaged at the time and since by his assumption of indifference to what was happening and his nonchalant handling of affairs. In this respect he resembled Asquith. Both men worked hard and then relaxed; the work was possibly less well known to the public than the relaxation. Unhappily there are always the square-toes lurking in the shadows and eager to condemn a character they do not understand.

In Melbourne's case one of these critics was Harriet Martineau, who was much shocked when she went to see him in the Home Office because he was gently blowing a feather round the top of his desk. And another square-toes was lurking in the obituary department of *The Times*. Greville writes: "I bitterly attacked Delane about it . . . and I hope he will change his biographer and employ for the future a lighter and more delicate hand."

As is also true of Asquith, Melbourne had far more authority over his colleagues than was often imagined from the outside. When he formed his second government he dismissed Wellesley as Viceroy of Ireland. George IV had once described Wellesley as a Spanish grandee grafted on an Irish potato; the grandee was unmistakable when he realized that he had been dropped. "Am I to be treated with contumely or indifference by this puppy, this damned scoundrel? The offence can only be expiated by blood." Even firmer was Melbourne's treatment of Brougham at the same time and it is difficult to think of any Prime Minister who can have written with such brutal frankness to a former colleague.

It is a very disagreeable task to have to say to a statesman that his character is injured in the public estimation; it is still more unpleasant to have to add that you consider this his own fault; and it is idle to expect to be able to convince almost any man and more particularly a man of very superior abilities and of unbounded confidence in those abilities, that this is the truth.

When the letter had been received he went round to see Brougham and was received with shouts of "Am I mad? Am I mad do you think?" Perhaps the question which Melbourne could not have answered with civility, and he closed the interview by saying: "God damn you, I tell you I can't give you the Great Seal and there's an end of it."

Of the whole Melbourne was unlucky with his nineteenth-century biographers. He had to wait thirty years for a biography and then it was two volumes by W. M. Torrens—a clumsy chatterbox who met his end by being run down by a hansom-cab. Melbourne's nephew said that the whole personality of his uncle had disappeared in Torrens's book and he encouraged Lloyd Sanders to edit some of Melbourne's papers and this was well (if discreetly) done. It was left to Mr Ziegler to fill in a complete picture from this and other sources—particularly the archives at Windsor. In this century the publication of the queen's letters and journal and also Lord David Cecil's scintillating biography roused attention to the fascination of Melbourne's character.

Mr Ziegler's book fits this character into its political setting. Rather unexpectedly he argues that Melbourne was more of an astute politician than is generally imagined; indeed we jump a little when he tells us that he was ambitious, cynical and without political principle. Here he differs from Lord David who says that Melbourne was not unhappy when he finally resigned because politics was not a subject to be taken very seriously. There is of course evidence for both points of view, and it is not perhaps easy to come down firmly on one side or the other. In 1817 Grey summed up the foundations of the Whig faith as tolerance, moderation and liberality and no linparity unless it can be shown to be necessary for the safety of the state. So far as these can be held to be political principles Melbourne stood by them. But the political struggles of the time never engaged his sympathy. He supported Catholic emancipation—essential for a Whig believer in tolerance—but he was never an enthusiast for parliamentary reform. His attitude towards the general reforms of his time is shown by the comments of a strong supporter of the Whig Poor Law Bill; he had stopped Melbourne in the street to enlist his support for the Bill—"he damned me, and damned the bill and damned the paupers". And if we seek for a principle in his political life perhaps we should find it in his belief in the Whig Party; certainly this was never ostentatiously proclaimed but it was tolerably consistently held, or as Mr Ziegler puts it, "he had a residual loyalty to the party of his youth".

He told Queen Victoria that when he was a young man "Mr Fox took great notice of me". In the confusion of party politics in the 1820s he was sometimes less stout-heartedly Whig than Fox might have desired, but it is significant that he wrote explaining why he disapproved of Wellington's government in 1829, a government which it was expected that he might have joined—"whatever may be the real feelings and merits of the leaders they have got such a damned character for intolerance".

Palmerston made it even clearer that there could be no question of Melbourne and his group joining Wellington's government "they would as soon jump off Westminster Bridge", but it was not only that Melbourne had the loyalties of youth to the Whig Party; they were strengthened by the long years of Tory rule. One of the most significant things here is Melbourne's conversion of the queen into a rabid member of the Whig Party. We have to remember that such loyalties do not flourish in courts and she was surrounded, excepting the Duke of Sussex, by a very strong Conservative family. It seems likely that Melbourne persuaded the queen—more through association than deliberately—that a return to Tory government would have been disastrous for the country because it might have fired those smouldering discontents among extremists of which he was ever apprehensive. If we search for consistency in Melbourne's politics we might say that he was not so much a Whig by tradition as an anti-Tory by conviction. And perhaps this was the reason why Gladstone at the end of his life said that in many ways Melbourne was a very fine fellow—"I wish we knew more about him". He would have enjoyed this biography.

Into the acid bath

By Germaine Greer

LISA ALTHER:
Kinflicks
503pp. Chatto and Windus. £4.95.

Lisa Alther's *Kinflicks* is the latest in the line of competitors for the title of Great Feminist Novel. It will hold its own in a field with *Diary of a Mad Housewife* and *Fear of Flying*, but when the publisher's blurb includes a glowing comment from Doris Lessing (as well as from Erica Jong) the reader may be excused for entering *Kinflicks* in the wrong race, with *Tom Jones* and *Catcher in the Rye* (which the publisher also mentions), where the stakes are much higher. Mistaken expectations do not themselves justify a negative view; reading *Kinflicks* is not simply a matter of lowering one's sights and enjoying the small delights which star Lisa Alther's 500 pages. The superficial attractions of her wildly erratic style adorn a callousness which is made more repellent by them.

Much of what is wrong with *Kinflicks* is already grinning in the title, an egregious pun on the *Variety* term skinflicks, pornographic films. The pun ought to have been resisted; as it is, its gratuitousness is only emphasized in the author's half-hearted attempt to justify it by reference to her heroine's mother's habit of filming all family occasions, a device which could have been wonderfully deployed if she had been wholly committed to it. But there is good deal of extraneous pertness decorating the crowded narrative, none of which deserves to be called wit. It is, rather, gothic drollery, and the gargoyles divert attention from a curiously empty and unstable structure.

The book casts its net wide, but takes up little. It would be the story of an American generation: it is a picaresque novel of a female *mayenne sensuelle* whose adventures are chiefly remarkable in that they do not raise her consciousness one notch. Ginny Babcock is an infantile egotist when she emerges upon her adult life (signified by the menarche) and the novel leaves her in the same condition at the end—which could, of course, be the whole point. The void of Ginny's personality have fallen all kinds of other mortals, many of whom have been annihilated. What is destroyed is more interesting, more heroic and more adventurous than she. She is Candy Christian after Wellesley, the New Feminism and the New Left: unfortunately, we are required to see things from her lazy-minded, pusillanimous point of view. This again might have been the point of the novel, but the glittering patchwork of Alther's style does not offer any indication of our being intended to shudder at Ginny Babcock. Disparate experience as an acid bath dissolves human flesh.

The book begins with an introductory passage of virtuoso flirtation with the *ars moriendi*, and then swings into its own rondo form, alternating passages of third-person narrative about the events of the month Ginny Babcock's mother was dying, and the first-person recollections of Ginny Babcock. The symbols and progressions of disease provide a ready-made literary form which Lisa Alther handles brilliantly. She loves technical language and for all I know deploys it with dazzling exactness in her fantastic encrustations upon the fact that Mrs Babcock has a rare disease which reduces her body to one kaleidoscopic bruise, and will die in polychromatous splendour at the end of the book.

Ginny's recollections are another matter. At first, when they deal with the peremptory penis of a smalltown Tennessee jock, they are hilarious and salty in a recognizably female tradition. Ginny then embarks on her second adventure, devised for her by a crippled bikie, less hilarious, less interesting. Her East Coast college career is anthropomorphized in the figure of Miss Head, from whom she is rescued by Miss Loins, a woman who is actually called Eddie Holzer. The corresponding developments in Miss Babcock are signalled by changes of clothes and hairstyle.

It is hard in the book that with Eddie Holzer, Ginny Babcock discovered orgasm. It is said in this way: "We spent the night in Eddie's narrow dummy institutional bed. I woke up delighted finally to know who put what where in physical love between women." When their relationship matures they manage to enjoy "a round of incredibly passionate sex, culminating in a breath-taking series of multiple orgasms, triggered by the insertion of greased little fingers into each other's anus". The description of Ginny's life with Eddie in the alternative society might have been written by Oliver Reed. The parody is grotesque, the writing limp and perfunctory. And as the narrative skates on, poor Eddie is summarily decapitated by her own man-trap, another woman electrocutes herself by excessive use of a worn-out vibrator, and the cabin burns down because the women cannot recognize the smell of gas.

Ginny, after her one heterosexual orgasm, in the course of which she conceives her daughter, is exposed, without visible effect, to draft-dodging, drugs, tantra and schizophrenia rolled up in another grotesque personification, and equally easily, loses husband and daughter and *caetera desunt*. Lisa Alther's is not the voice of liberated woman, nor the voice of female wit. To clear the fogged brain of the flicker of *Kinflicks*, 500 words of Dorothy Parker will suffice.

Paying the penalty

By Julie Welch

BRIAN GLANVILLE:
The Dying of the Light
184pp. Secker and Warburg. £3.50.

I was told during the Olympics that some of the East European Olympic gymnasts, those flat-faced, asexual, teenaged girls, had been given pills to delay their puberty; in *The Dying Of the Light*, correspondingly, I hailed by the over-protected life a footballer leads, Brian Glanville's hero Len Rawlings is stuck in adolescent limbo—"I've said my father is a selfish child", records his daughter Jenny, "and I can prove it; spoiled and selfish even for a footballer, who's encouraged to be spoiled and selfish."

Hero is not really the right term for Rawlings, not the complete one at any rate. Once he was a great goalkeeper, a star of the pre-war cloth-cap boulder-booted genus; now, rejected as a manager for his uncompromising attitudes and as good as penniless, he is unable to resign himself to being a discarded failure who commits petty crime and is remembered solely by way of his past exploits. Rawlings speaking:

> You'd think they'd listen to me, wouldn't you. Bloody directors. Thirty-eight England caps. Best keeper of my day. Blokes that never kicked a ball. But oh, no. So in the end I told them. You don't want a manager, I said. What you want is a bloody yesman.

Jenny comments "He's in Croydon. . . . He lives there in a little house. And he more or less does nothing."

The scenario, told in flashback, bears some resemblance to a true one, that of the famous England footballer Tommy Lawton, who in the aftermath of a brilliant playing career sank into a distressing kind of obscurity. There is, too, a general significance as well as a particular. Even these days, when a fistful of players possess university degrees and the top-liners augment their wage packets with the feedback from external business ventures, a footballer's earning potential is largely and unnaturally concentrated into the short between late teens and early thirties. Some succeed later at managerial level, but this being an occupation which demands abilities pretty dissimilar to those needed by a high-class footballer (the natural gifts of athleticism and "nous" as opposed to those of administrative ability and man management), it isn't really surprising that there is a high rate of failure to make the transition.

This problem is exacerbated, as in Len Rawlings's case, by the fact that footballers, even modern ones, have dependences thrust upon them. The kind of boy who becomes a footballer is often scantily educated, and spends his formative teens in the paternal, insular atmosphere of his club; small wonder that his emergence into the world outside sometimes causes withdrawal symptoms.

Rawlings is the archetype—"He'd always been a force of Nature, that was his strength and his genius. . . . What's any of it got to do with management? If anything, it's the reverse of management, the instinctive against the ratiocinative." The narrative is split between the bewildered but unalterably arrogant Rawlings and his daughter Jenny, who has made it to being a teacher and who is simultaneously distanced from and strangely close to her father. It is (in cool, clever Jenny with her secret passionateness that Mr Glanville raises the very important subject of the nature and extent of our obligations to forces of Nature like Rawlings:

> . . . how great performers were used, applauded, yes, we like they were still useful and paid so long as they were performing. . . . How skilfully they (the antagonists) dodged behind the facts, the only thing that mattered, that joy had been given and to millions, people's lives had been lit up. Was their debt any the less, because it had all happened incidentally?

Mr Glanville pursues his argument to a melodramatic end; the clear satisfactory bit of a work that is hammered out with composedness and meticulous insight.

Dangerous pursuits

By John McEwan

JULIAN FANE:
Rounds of Spring and other stories
217pp. Hamish Hamilton. £3.95.

Julian Fane's view of love is predominantly negative, at best fatalistic; and the ten stories in this collection, though quite separate, are linked by a chronology which moves from the acute ivationalities of childhood through the cockeyed of manhood to the comforting rationalisations of age. Within this cycle certain ideas remain more constant than others: that love reveals the true extent of the damage that we have incurred as children; that sex is a trap; that marriage continues to be an unavoidable pursuit but seldom works.

Mr Fane is best when recalling childhood, and the most successful story here is the first and longest, almost a novella, "Familiar Landscape with Ponies". Nostalgic descriptions of country life are almost inseparable from the banalities of Georgian prose, but though the faithful blacksmith does put in an appearance and there are one too many "musical" laughs and "scudding" clouds, Mr Fane has written an account of hunting worthy of the best anthology; a story not only of bonding but about cowardice, love and much more. His prose is simple but spiced with poetic accuracy—lathered reins slip through the boy's fingers like "a sponge with soap in it", a bucking pony flights like "a fish on a hook"—and the tension is never relaxed by the scene-settings.

The other stories are not, it seems to me, as far-reaching, though they are all very readable. Their brevity makes for a more staccato narrative; there is less time for poetic insights, more characterization by contradiction and more banal situations. There is also a tendency for the dialogue to become sententious. It is on childhood and the sitters, animals and the relationship of people to animals, above all on the sources of our mysterious inability to grow up, that Mr Fane is at his best and most disturbing.

Menace and the middle classes

By Anthony Quinton

P. M. HUBBARD:
The Causeway
191pp. Macmillan. £2.95.

I locked the car and walked to the dry cleaners 200 yards away, next to the shuttered antique shop. As far as I could tell no one was watching or following me. Once inside I put my trousers on the counter. It was dark and it took a moment or two for my eyes to adjust. The girl on the other side of the counter stood in a sad, defensive way, not saying anything. She was extraordinarily beautiful. The dull brown dress she was wearing could not manage to hide the magnificence of her body.

"I'd like these cleaned and pressed", I said.

Her eyes opened a little. I thought she was going to refuse, perhaps to advise me to go somewhere else.

"Wednesday all right?", she said. "After two on Wednesday?" It sounded like a warning. And there was something I could not understand about the way in which she kept her eyes down on the counter.

There was a noise in the dark area at the back of the shop and one of the largest men I have ever seen came and stood just behind her left shoulder. He was wearing a tight suit in vivid check material. Although he must have been at least fifty he looked very dangerous.

"I'll deal with this", he said to the girl. She stood up rather straight.

"Go and fill that other basket, will you?", he went on. He had not looked at me yet. Then he turned his eyes on me. As they looked like mine I had a sense of vast, barely controlled aggression. But his voice, when it came, was quite pleasant, although there was something at the back of it I did not like at all.

"Wednesday all right, then, Sir?" he said as the girl turned and made for the darkness at the back of the shop. I nodded, watching her carefully.

"Do you can have them handfinished, for another 10p?" I don't think I'd much like to be hand-finished by you, I thought. It seemed safest to go along with him.

"Yes, that'd be fine, I'd like them hand-finished." If he was surprised, he did not show it. With a deliberate movement he picked up the trousers that I had been holding all this time.

"I'll just give you a ticket", he said.

I could not think of anything better to say than "Ah, of course."

I started to peer into the back of the shop to get another glimpse of the girl. The way in which he stood there seemed to say: I shouldn't do that if I were you. It somehow seemed better not to. But I felt sure I should see her again. Of course I did not realize then how right I was.

Admirers of P. M. Hubbard will, I hope, recognize the foregoing passage as an attempt to catch the essentials of his style and subject-matter. In short, lucid, properly constructed sentences he succeeds in investing everyday circumstances with a shapelessly menacing quality. He has been doing this now for fourteen years, starting in 1963 with *Flush As May*. *The Causeway* is the fourteenth of his books and is a paradigm of his work. He usually gets excellent reviews in which it is pointed out that as regards style and what may be called moral taste he is very much above the general run of the writers with whom he is categorized. But since his books are thrillers, or rather, in a notably accurate publisher's phrase, "novels of suspense", they are treated in brief paragraphs that form part of collective round-ups of works of popular entertainment.

There must be other groups of committed Hubbardites besides the small devotional group I have brought into being by word-of-mouth recommendation. But he is not yet, as he should be, part of the ordinary stock of literary reference. It is no use saying "what a very Hubbardian restaurant this is" in the hope of securing agreement about the presence of sinister hints and implications in some place in which one happens to be eating. Few of his books have appeared in paperback, only two, I believe, and then not in very well-known lists. Of the author himself I know only what is said on the back of his dust-jackets. After reading Greats at Oxford he went into the Indian Civil Service, coming back to England when India became independent in 1947. He worked as a free-lance writer, contributing parliamentary reports and verse, among other things, to *Punch*, before becoming "deputy director of a national industrial organization". He then gave that up for full-time writing.

For all its sparseness this biography, which remains pretty much unchanged from book to book, is entirely concordant with the style and setting of Hubbard's novels. They are, essentially, upper-middle or professional class works, about and for the sort of people who own largish, if not very new, Rovers and are not embarrassed when being measured for a suit. His characters usually live in an economically somewhat unproductive, sex-repressing-engenderingly isolated way because they "have a bit of money of their own". Hubbard's people size each other up in the manner of those who have been to fee-paying boarding schools. The women among them carry out their domestic duties in a briskly efficient style but with that slight edge of impatience and improvisation that results from incomplete adaptation to the disappearance of domestic servants. They speak with a relaxed, faintly aggressive colloquialism in which clichés and stock phrases are kept in their place by faint but unmistakable inverted commas.

This acute but not oppressive sensitivity to social and linguistic nuances is just one aspect of the sustained excellence of Hubbard's writing. His prose is of extreme plainness and simplicity, as free from adjectival fat as the *De Bello Gallico*. Large imaginative effects are produced by the most economical verbal means, by the lightest of touches on a neatly arranged lever. His characters come before the reader with very little in the way of supporting information. The heroes are reflective, unillusioned, physically enterprising and capable men in the prime of life, usually without anything much in the way of a past and currently free from any encumbering involvement with people or institutions. They are, as it were, socially and historically stripped down, available for adventure.

Thus Peter Grant, hero and narrator of *The Causeway*, is a single man, selling agricultural machinery, very much in his own time and without interfering surveillance, to farmers in south-western Scotland. There is a married couple he has come to know in an unspecified way at some time in the past, and it is while sailing his small boat along the coast to visit them that he gets blown ashore into the book's main drama, but otherwise he is without visible dependants, neighbours or superiors.

The other characters are comparably schematic. Commander Barlow and his wife Lotty, the other leading figures in the story, are a retired naval commander and an attractive and appropriate wife living in a measure of natural isolation that is massively compounded by the mode of life on which, for reasons that excitingly emerge, the Commander insists. He has "some money" and keeps his property "in hand", but sees no one and goes hardly anywhere, wholly preoccupied by the obsession which makes his hermetic existence necessary. He and his wife are conveyed to us simply by their attitudes, gestures and choice of words, yet they are complete and distinctive personalities.

In *The Causeway*, as in most of Hubbard's recent novels, the cast of characters is small and the pattern of events has an elemental, mythic form. The unattached hero, seemingly bent on the quiet time he is situated for and is seen as enjoying, comes accidentally into contact with an intriguing couple, in which the man, a sinisterly forceful being who leaves a great deal unsaid, holds the woman in some kind of inexplicit but effective bondage. The role of the hero is, at considerable danger to himself, concerned to rescue the woman from the man, not so much to awaken the sleeping beauty as to nerve and enable her to elude the grasp of a beast whose decline from princedom cannot be reversed by a kiss.

This pattern has taken some time to develop itself. In Hubbard's second book, *Picture of Millie*, for example, the hero is a Special Branch man on holiday in Cornwall with his attractive and companionable wife and their three young daughters. Millie, the beauty, is dead and the only service to be done for her is to establish, in all its ramifications, the manner of her death. In *The Holm Oaks* Jake Haddon comes to live in a remote inherited house with his wife and her sister but, important as they are, the main business is the deliverance of the beautiful woman in the only other house for miles around from the possessive mania of her peculiar husband. Johnnie Slade, in *A Hive of Glass*, another early book, is a more morally questionable figure than most of Hubbard's heroes, a glass-collector prepared to go to very startling lengths in his pursuit of an Elizabethan tazza and Claudia, with whom he becomes involved, is comparably rough and dangerous, more Lady Macbeth than Rosalind. But since *The Country of Again*, in which Hubbard's TCB experience is drawn on to rake over the embers of old crime in Pakistan in his unique fictional departure from the more thinly populated parts of the British Isles, the beauty and the beast pattern has increasingly asserted itself.

Mention of the dangerous Claudia justifies a digression on the special qualities of Hubbard's women. They are intensely attractive, even when not "formally beautiful", in a way that argues a large and engaging susceptibility on the part of their creator. They respond to amorous overtures with delightful rapidity. They make agreeable educated jokes. Thus Cynthia, in *The Tower*, with its slightly Powysian village setting, wanting to make herself comfortable before going for a drive with the hero, says "Just give me a moment while I go and fix my motoring veil". Claudia prevents an initial bit of erotic grappling from running its full course. Johnnie speaks.

> "All right", I said, "this party's over. The other is adjourned *sine die*." Claudia sat up and said: "That'll be the *dies*." She went to the nominative without hesitation. She was not called Claudia for nothing.

Like quite a number of Hubbard's recent books *The Causeway* is set in Scotland, perhaps because the author has settled there, but anyway, in view of the low density of the Scottish population, most conformities to his particular literary purposes. Even more prominent than Scotland in his writings is water. A good many of the novels are set on or near the coast and involve a good deal of activity in small boats. In none are thole-pin, cleat and spinnaker more in evidence than in *The Causeway*.

Reviewers, looking for an informative parallel, have sometimes compared Hubbard with John Buchan. At a fairly abstract level there is something in the comparison. With their educated characters, their sparing recourse to violence, the sense they convey of violence just below the bland surface of things, they are likely to appeal to much the same constituency of readers. But Buchan's fictional world is much more populous than Hubbard's. Only in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* does Hannay operate with the loneliness that is the usual situation of Hubbard's heroes. From that point on the whole old-boy network (first-class division) is there to be called upon in the hour of need or danger: Sandy Arbuthnot, Leithen, Lamancha, Sir Walter Bullivant, etc. Again in Buchan the personal adventure always has a wider public or political significance, as when the three hostages are taken as part of a general conspiracy of social destruction or the Reverend John Laputa is trying prematurely to whistle up the wind of change in Africa. The fulcrum of Hubbard's plots is always personal. Although a racket for the secret exporting of stolen works of art is exposed in *Picture of Millie*, it is marginal to the main drama which concerns the relations of the abundant, flirtatious Millie to various people, particularly to the elderly, blazered, inarticulate major to whom she is married.

The fact is that Hubbard is a wholly original writer with an idiosyncratic vision of people and the way in which they interact, a kind of imaginative transcription into the idiom of the British upper middle-class of the insights of Erving Goffman about the presentation of the self in everyday life. Beyond the suspense, excitement and erotic geniality it has to offer, it also carries, unobtrusively, a social or political message, namely that the stratum of people not quite at the top of the heap who actually made the traditional machine function is not wholly defunct; its members, even when they have gone off the rails, remain formidable. They are bound together by a sharing of assumptions that makes communication effective even when almost imperceptible. Hubbard expresses his vision with wit, delightful verbal economy and the special, unforgettable intensity of genuine commitment. He can write as well as Susan Hill and is often as funny as William Trevor. It is with them he should properly be classified, and not with the James Hadley Chases of the present age with whom the conventions of reviewing have so far associated him.

Criminal proceedings

BRIAN FREEMANTLE:
The November Man
238pp. Cape. £2.95.

MATTHEW VAUGHAN:
The Discretion of Dominick Ayres
243pp. Secker and Warburg. £3.90.

Brian Freemantle's latest thriller has a subtle and almost excessively Machiavellian plot: under cover of negotiations to achieve the mutual withdrawal of troops from Europe and the phased destruction of missile sites, both the Soviet Union and the United States are pursuing other ends by means so devious as to make a game of chess look like noughts and crosses. The author does the high-level intrigue very well, and the book is given flesh in the character of the Austrian Altmann, once a concentration camp inmate and now a double agent caught between the KGB and the CIA while his wife is dying in a Swiss sanatorium. The novel carries conviction at most levels, but an exception must be made for the character of the English millionaire Jocelyn Hollis, whose naivety seems remarkable for a hard-headed businessman. Can he really believe that the award of a peerage will put him level in his wife's eyes, with her brother, about to become President of the United States?

Matthew Vaughan's novel is set in 1896. Its hero, Dominick Ayres, is a misanthropic Old Etonian private detective who lives in Clapham. He is called in by the police to help them in the investigation of a series of murders: in one month the bodies of three beautiful young men, all savagely beaten to death, have been dragged out of the Thames. In pursuit of the murderers, Ayres follows a trail which leads him from bourgeois Hampstead to squalid Islington, from royal Sandringham to vampire-ridden Transylvania. From here he returns, via Budapest (where he solves, *en passant*, the most famous of Austro-Hungarian historical mysteries), to bucolic Rutland, where the chase comes to a violent climax. Ayres obviously owes something to Holmes, but not a great deal: with a passion for railway engines and an ex-prostitute as a mistress, he is an eccentric in his own right, set by Matthew Vaughan in a neat and elegant Victorian frame.

T. J. Binyon

Footprints of Gormenghast

By Eric Korn

JOHN WATNEY:
Mervyn Peake
255pp. Michael Joseph. £6.50.

I cannot give the reasons,
I only sing the tunes:
The sadness of the seasons
The madness of the moons.

This thorough, sympathetic and straightforward biography of Mervyn Peake brings the reader into an uncomfortably direct contact with the Central Mystery of Creativity. The book is well researched, well illustrated, and free from speculative nonsense; but inexorably it raises the huge if empty question of the source of inspiration. For Peake's was a life, till its long-drawn final agony, strikingly free of drama.

There can be no question, I take it, that Peake's was not just a minor talent happily disporting in mannered surrealism. "A Tale of Deeds Done in a Non-existent Environment by Human Oddities" was the heading for one American review of *Titus Groan*. It was a huge talent, and required huge energies to control it. Its creative core was a fusion of the graphic and verbal imaginations, such as we find elsewhere only in Blake. (Lear, of course, was also his master, but only in a narrow region.) When he sketched workers in a glass factory, he "found at the same time that phrases were forming in my mind, and verbal images tangential or even remote from what was actually taking place!" Conversely when he wrote, what emerged was densely visual; indeed one of his few remarks about the method of construction of *Titus Groan* is it is "hard to make the characters talk on the same scale that they look".

His fictional world is as crowded, alien and ferocious as a drop of pondwater seen under a microscope; but Gormenghast is no more neo-Gothic game, nor yet an emblematic counterpart world like Tolkien's. His monsters are there not to thrill the reader but to frighten Titus into adulthood, an adulthood whose morality is forged by the hammer of the bizarre on the anvil of the real. For all its rich locations, the story of Titus is not a picaresque novel but a *Bildungsroman*. *Titus Groan* unearths his roots; on the first page of *Gormenghast* "first and ever foremost he is *child*"; on the last page of *Titus Alone* (as first published)—"he had grown up". And the work would have continued it seems: "I think he intended to take Titus on to old age and death" said his widow Maeve Gilmore; some stammering but suggestive phrases of the fourth volume exist.

But if one looks in Mervyn Peake's life story for the gigantic convulsions of his imagination, one looks in vain. His childhood was exotic enough certainly, as the son of a medical missionary in China and subject to sudden change, but there is little evidence of external drama.

Mr Watney is obliged to make much of any faint footprint of Gormenghast; his birthplace, Kuling, was "equally remote, mysterious and subject to ritual and tradition"; but the rituals of Gormenghast are not those of China, but those of the Bursery, grotesquely overgrown. Mr Watney spends some time on Dr Peake's experiences in the Chinese Revolution of 1911, which can hardly have troubled the baby. When Mervyn was three, the family left for home leave on the Trans-Siberian railway, and for a few moments his elder brother was almost lost during a night stop in a forest; in Peking a camel tried to bite his hand; on his first day at school he was cased by his brother, a prefect. But all this seems hardly relevant to the Intergalactic darkness, the dinosaurian beasts, the Satanic treacheries of his imagined world. Once, he spied from the hospital rafters while his father performed an amputation: Mervyn fainted and fell. Here, perhaps, is something on the scale of his fictions, and Titus falls through a gigantic glass roof at Lady Cusp-Canine's party.

His path in later life, before the onset of his illness, was remarkably direct. At school he was unacademic, but his talent was recognized and fostered. (Inevitably, some of his schoolmasters populate Gormenghast.) He went to art school; he left art school; he dedicated himself to his art with only the youthful minimum of artishness; he was healthy, popular, and productive; he met and married a woman, Maeve Gilmore, who returned his unambiguous devotion. His life story is a chronicle of creative work, of efforts to find a house to work in and the money to feed his family. Sometimes the architectural detail provided shows signs of desperation: the art centre on Sark "used reinforced concrete containing Guernsey granite dust (supplied by Messrs A. and J. H. Falla of St Sampson's, Guernsey)". There are some entertaining anecdotes:

A number of intellectuals were there. One of them, rather condescendingly, asked Maeve what she thought of the recently completed glass-fronted shop Peter Jones in Sloane Square. Overcome with shyness and completely ignorant of, indeed uninterested in, the subject of glass-fronted shops, Maeve blurted out, "I think it's negative", burst into tears and had to be led away and comforted by her husband. After that, intellectuals were always a source of anxiety and distrust to her.

Despite the intellectuals, the Peakes were modestly successful; his paintings sold, he did the designs for a production of *The Insect Play*, he began to be spoken of. Above all he worked. His mentor, Eric Drake, wrote: "His physical activity was the key to his imagination's creativity—joyous immediacy completely free." A little hypochondria is perhaps not alien to such physical high spirits; when examined by a doctor for an insurance scheme he fainted twice from alarm, or so we are told.

But there was something brittle about his vitality. His military career ended oddly. After a series of unsuitable jobs (he was the only member of a bomb disposal squad to start a fire) he was refused compassionate leave to attend the birth of his second son, went AWOL, got into some still undisclosed trouble on his return and finished up with a nervous breakdown and a discharge. But the war years were productive ones: *Shapes and Sounds*, *Rhymes without Reason*, *Titus Groan*, and some of his finest illustrations: *The Ancient Mariner*, *The Hunting of the Snark*, and the *Alice* drawings. The war also took away: a bomb removed the stock of *Captain Slaughterboard* (though public inaction must have reinforced enemy action as a reason for the extreme scarcity of this edition, for it had already been on sale for six months when the calamity occurred).

After the war his extraordinary creativity continued: perhaps more driven, less directed: there seem to have been more abandoned projects. A sketching mission to Belsen darkened his imagination forever. In 1956 came the first symptoms of the disease that was to destroy him; there can be little doubt that it was a Parkinsonism, presumably postencephalitic, the delayed consequence of the epidemic of 1917. He had the symptoms now made more familiar by Oliver Sacks's *Awakenings*; the tremors and restlessness and ritual repetitions, the awful precipitant old man's shuffle, the mind slowmoving in a congealing time. At first slow, the sickness was accelerated after the failure of his play, *The Wit to Woo*, brought on some kind of collapse. There is a truly horrific photograph of Peake at fifty, hands clenched like claws, hollow-eyed, skull-faced in front of a battlemented nursing home. Inevitably one thinks of his own locales, the recurring skeletonic theme in his writings. Still, physical comfort, a dance, above all drawing, could remit the symptoms: "I noticed that his hand had ceased its normal shaking, and that he was sitting upright with the paper held firmly, concentrating. For more than an hour he seemed to lose touch with his illness altogether. . . ." The notion of touch is important; she bright intervals became rarer; the gift was withdrawn. The last four years were almost wholly dark; in 1968 he finally lost touch.

We are left, inevitably, with a mystery. His friend Rodney Ackland found his talent uncanny: Mervyn's drawings included prophetic portraits of his unborn children (but it was Rodney Ackland who found a bed in his bedroom). Michael Moorcock wrote a writer "utterly without self-consciousness and with a tremendous discipline over his imagination"; he himself spoke of being "on the qui-vive while waiting for opportunities for the imagination to take its own course—as long as that course didn't hurt the mood of the book". Prodigious hard work of course, but also prodigious spontaneity: he drew a sardonic self-portrait in a nonsense poem:

In gorgery and gushness
And all that squishified.
My voice has all the lushness
Of what I cant abide
And yet it has a beauty
Most proud and terrible
Denied to those whose duty
Is to be cerebral.

The Cheshire Cat: one of Mervyn Peake's illustrations for Alice's Adventures in Wonderland *reproduced in John Watney's biography.*

Nuts for a toothless squirrel

By Cecil Parrott

LEONID PASTERNAK:
Zapisi Raznykh Let
286pp and 150 illustrations. Moscow: Sovietsky Khudozhnik. £5.

Few of those who have filed through this summer's Tolstoy Exhibition in the British Museum, and who stood, breathless with adoration, before the seven stages of his life, as synoptically presented by the Tolstoy Museum in Moscow, would credit it if told that twenty years ago it was quite difficult to lay one's hands on a copy of the great man's works in a bookshop in the Russian capital. Indeed, I myself had to travel to Kiev to find a copy of *Anna Karenina*. *Resurrection* was easier to acquire, and I was lucky enough to pick up an old edition with fascinating illustrations, which stood out in a country where book illustration has been rather neglected. They were the work of Leonid Pasternak, the father of Boris.

It is no coincidence that a very considerable number of the portraits and sketches of the Russian writer, and of the illustrations to his books displayed at the exhibition, come from the brush or pen of this same artist, because in his portrayal of Tolstoy, Pasternak is rightly regarded as having come nearer to the man than more famous Russian artists, like Kramskoi, Ge and Repin, in spite of the greater opportunities offered them.

What is a happy coincidence is that in the year of the exhibition a book has appeared in Britain called *Zapisi Raznykh Let* (Memoirs and Notes from Various Years) by Leonid Pasternak himself, which not only tells the fascinating story of the artist's friendship with Tolstoy, but contains reproductions of his portraits of many other outstanding personalities of his time, both Russian and non-Russian. The author enlivens his drawings and paintings with delightful anecdotes about his "sitters", in which he reveals an attractive sense of humour, and tells us much that is new about art trends in Russia at the turn of the century and beyond. The book has the advantage that the artist's memoirs have been edited and prepared for publication by his daughter, Josephine, in Oxford, and his son, Alexander, in Moscow.

The author, who is a very readable writer, gives us a lively and moving account of the greatest event of his life—that day in 1893 when Tolstoy suddenly appeared at an exhibition of the "Travellers", stopped before one of his paintings and admired it. As a result, Pasternak was immediately presented to him and invited to come to tea and show him some illustrations he had made for *War and Peace*. Tolstoy said that they were exactly as he had imagined the novel. "When I was writing the book, I dreamed of such illustrations." He was upset that he had discovered Pasternak so late in life. "When the squirrel no longer has any teeth, they offer him nuts!" he said in deep emotion.

This led later to a sudden and unexpected "order" to Pasternak to come to Yasnaya Polyana and illustrate Tolstoy's forthcoming novel *Resurrection*. When Tolstoy eventually saw his illustrations he wept, and even wanted to alter the book to make it fit them.

But if Tolstoy was undoubtedly the greatest of Pasternak's "sitters", there are many other giants, Russian and non-Russian, whom he brilliantly captured, through his unique ability to sketch a historic and unforgettable scene while it was taking place rather than reconstruct it from memory. Thus, in his book we see Scriabin playing his *Prometheus* under the baton of Koussevitsky, Rachmaninov playing the Tchaikovsky trio, Prokofiev at the piano, as well as Medtner, Nikisch, Chaliapin, Diaghilev, and other outstanding artists. Pasternak's close associations with the musicians of his day, if not directly due to his gifted painter's wife, Rosa, was at least encouraged by her. She had been a well-known infant prodigy and had given up a promising professional career to devote herself to her husband, his art, and their family. But in this book we find portraits and sketches not only of musicians, but of Einstein, Rilke (who was particularly fond of Pasternak), Lovis Corinth, Gerhardt Hauptmann, Gordon Craig, Gorky, and Lenin, as well as innumerable delightful studies of the Pasternak family—Rosa at the piano or with the children, his eldest son Boris, and the other children, Alexander, Josephine and Lydia.

One does not have to know Russian to be able to revel in the copious reproductions, which are technically rather above the normal Soviet standards of quality, if still not good enough. But if one cannot read the contents one will miss some essential facts of Russian art history, about which we know too little. Pasternak, who was born in Odessa and studied painting there, spent twenty years on the staff of the Moscow School of Painting. He was a founder member of the Moscow-dominated Union of Russian Artists and is well qualified to illuminate the antagonism between St Petersburg (dominated first by academicism and later by Benois, Diaghilev and the World of Art), and Moscow (represented mainly by easel painters—impressionists and colourists).

Pasternak's visits to the Kupferstich-Kabinett (Graphic Collection) in Munich, and his instinctive dislike of the vast oil canvases of the Munich Academy, had instilled in him the firm conviction that graphic art lay at the basis of all painting, which should have allied him with the graphic artists of St Petersburg. But he joined the drawing circle of the Polenovs in Moscow and became one of the few graphic artists in Moscow.

We learn that the quarrel which led to the foundation of the Union of Russian Artists arose mainly from the desire of the Moscow fraternity to be free—to be able to exhibit what they liked and not to be fettered by a hanging committee or the prejudices or predilections of an individual such as Diaghilev. Since most art students have been brought up to believe that the only art which existed in Russia at the turn of the century was the World of Art movement and the avant-garde, what the author has to say about the merits of the Moscow school is of the greatest possible interest.

Having spent most of the interwar period in Germany, Pasternak was preparing to return to the Soviet Union when he was caught by illness and the outbreak of the Second World War. He was persuaded to come to England and stay temporarily with his daughter at Oxford, but was never able to return to his country and died in Oxford in 1945. Living so much in Germany he was naturally more exposed to Western influences than were his colleagues who stayed at home.

But, as an impressionist, if of a typically Russian kind, who none the less shocked some of his contemporaries, he did not surrender to the influences of twentieth-century expressionist German painting (although here and there, there is a trace of Munch and others). He was, as he himself confesses, a firm opponent of modern "isms".

Although he excelled in a wide range of subjects, I find him at his most masterly in his sketches of the home circle, where he managed to combine exquisite line, perfect composition and unerring likeness. He was a poet with pencil or brush and it is not surprising that poets like Rilke and Tsvetaievova were drawn to him, or that his son was the greatest Russian poet of recent times.

At the astonishingly low price of only £5 this is a book well worth buying for the illustrations alone. But it is a pity that there is no résumé in English or French. Even translations of the captions of the illustrations would have been some compensation.

The pleasure and the guilt

By Anne Stevenson

ANN STANFORD:
Anne Bradstreet
The Worldly Puritan
170pp. New York: Burt Franklin. $14.50.

KARL KELLER:
The Example of Edward Taylor
319pp. University of Massachusetts Press. $14.50.

Of the versifiers of seventeenth-century New England, only two—Anne Bradstreet and Edward Taylor—seem to us to have been poets, as distinct from moralizers in doggerel or composers of fashionable word-games (although there is plenty of doggerel in their work, and Edward Taylor wrote pictorial love verses fantastic enough to compete with today's concrete poetry). Both were, of course, Puritans, and they shared with their fellow exiles an obsessive concern with salvation. But as writers they tapped the mainstream of English culture. That is to say, neither felt consciously American. There is little in their poetry to suggest that it was written in precarious settlements on the fringe of an unexplored continent. The title of Anne Bradstreet's collection, published in London in 1650, is itself an indication of how seriously she took her obligation to write in a style of which literary England would approve. This is what appeared on the title page:

THE TENTH MUSE Lately sprung up in AMERICA. OR Severall Poems, compiled with great variety of Wit and Learning, full of delight. Wherein especially is contained a compleat discourse and description of the Four *Elements, Constitutions, Ages of Man, Seasons of the Year*. Together with an Exact Epitomie of the Four Monarchies, viz. The *Assyrian Persian Grecian, Roman*. Also a Dialogue between Old *England* and New, concerning the late troubles. With divers other pleasant and serious Poems. By a Gentlewoman in those parts.

For all the pomposity of this title, Anne Bradstreet wrote in a "plain style" for her time. She herself seems to have been one of the most sympathetic of the settlers, and we owe to her manuscript poems, published in 1678 after her death, some of the brightest glimpses we have of Puritan family life and affection. Her appeal to us now is largely through her personal poems. The formal elegies and quaternions she laboured over in imitation of Du Bartas—a poet she unfortunately rated among the immortals with Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney—are weak examples of a tradition which by then was already eclipsed. The quaternions, in particular, are examples of how wooden the allegorical form had become since Spenser.

In her introduction to Anne Bradstreet's poems Ann Stanford does her best to make the tired and other more or less tedious efforts interesting, but the best that can be said of her analyses is that they be paid of her analyses is that they are short. Dr Stanford's book adds little to the careful reading Elizabeth Wade White gave to Anne Bradstreet's poems in [illegible] Stanford has developed her book around a specific thesis. Indeed, not infrequently it reads like a thesis in the strictly academic sense.

The significance of Dr Stanford's subtitle "The Worldly Puritan" becomes clear as her argument proceeds. She says in her preface:

Anne Bradstreet's entire canon represents the struggle between the visible and invisible worlds. Earth and the things of the earth had on her a solid grasp. Though the spirit might point out the virtues of the unseen, Anne Bradstreet was always most conscious of the pleasures and rewards of earth—love, family, comfort, learning, fame.

Worldliness, then, in Dr Stanford's opinion, was the principal subject of Anne Bradstreet's lifelong inner dialogue. In the early poems, the argument between this world and the next took the form of allegorical debate, and the world seems to be supreme. In the later "Contemplations", the invisible world wins, "but never a clear victory".

So much for Dr Stanford's thesis, which is tenable, as far as it goes. It is, anyway, the simple skeleton of a rather slender piece of historical criticism. Anne Bradstreet has been the subject of much interest of late, partly because she was the first serious poet in colonial America; partly because she was a woman, and women poets are in fashion now; and partly because, in spite of her tendency to debunk herself, she was a poet of talent. At her best she pleases because she stays within her limits. Torn as she may have been between delight in this world and desire for the next, for a New Englander she was exceptionally sane. Nowhere in her verse is there an inkling of the religious neurosis that typifies the work of Edward Taylor later in the century. She exhibits none of the spiritual terror of Emily Dickinson or, for that matter, of the Anne Bradstreet invoked by John Berryman in his "Homage". Her worldliness or sin—for a Puritan she mentions sin rarely—consisted of a passionate love for her husband, great affection for her children, and a liking for personal possessions. She had been brought up comfortably in England and around the household of the Earl of Lincoln. In the New World, both her husband and father were at times governors of the Massachusetts colony; although she suffered hardships during its first years when, as she put it, her "heart rose" up against it, she afterwards "submitted to it" and joined to the church at Boston". Perhaps it is the reluctance of her submission that appeals to us in her domestic poetry.

Dr Stanford makes comparatively little of what, surely, are Anne Bradstreet's best poems. She scarcely quotes, for instance, from the poem she wrote to her husband, anticipating death before the birth of one of her children:

If any worth or virtue were in me,
Let that live freshly in thy memory
And when you feel'st no grief, as I no harms,
Yet love thy dead, who long lay in thine arms . . .

Poems like this are touching to the point of tears because, like Henry King's "The Exequy", they let a ray of light through a chink in the formal trappings of an age more public than ours, and illuminate the private hearts of real people. We are the romantics, of course, and it is our prejudices that find moving the allegorical arguments deadly dull, while we are moved by poems about the loves and deaths of individuals. Any book, however, that sets out to do justice to Anne Bradstreet in our time has to reflect the tastes of our time. It is not enough to set out a thesis and prove it in a series of neat chapters rising, regular as stops, to the monument of a clinching statement.

But perhaps it is unfair to quibble about what a book does not do instead of dwelling on what it does do. Dr Stanford has given us a presentable little volume, attractively illustrated with engravings out of Francis Quarles's and George Wither's seventeenth-century [illegible] vides, too, a chronology of Anne Bradstreet's works, a frequency list of her images, a list of books Anne Bradstreet had probably read, and a useful selected bibliography. Much, too, that Dr Stanford has to say is relevant both to seventeenth-century studies and to Anne Bradstreet's development as a poet; she notes intelligently, for instance, an affinity of the later elegies with the lyrics of Herrick and the English Cavaliers.

Quite a different sort of Puritan altogether was Edward Taylor, the isolated "metaphysical" of the Connecticut River valley, whose poetry in manuscript was unearthed from the archives and edited from New England as late as the 1930s. Taylor had been educated for the ministry in Puritan England before, in 1668, he emigrated to America with the second wave of Caroline dissidents. He was twenty-two or twenty-three when he entered Harvard where he soon became a notable scholar and an favourite with President Chauncy. In 1671, a tiny settlement on the Connecticut River a hundred miles to the west of Cambridge sent an emissary to Harvard in search of a minister. Taylor was appealed to, and after some hesitation, he agreed to undertake the service. He set forth in the snow "not without much apprehension of a tedious and hazardous journey" to his place of exile "far off from the Muses Copses . . . in these remotest Swamps".

But Taylor's emblematical imagination interpreted his safe passage through the wilderness as evidence of a call from God. He remained, *therefore, in Westfield for the rest of a long life, consolidating his parish, defending the church covenant*, while fending off attacks from the Indians and bringing up a large family. None of the details of this frontier life, however, got into Taylor's poetry, all of which, with the exception of a few early pieces, is devotional and composed in the cloited baroque style of the more "conceited" Elizabethans. It was a style that by the late seventeenth century was already anachronistic.

A messianic zealot, cut off from intellectual Boston, Taylor was nevertheless a legalistic and contentious man, fascinated by science as well as by the pseudo-science of the occult. He was the doctor as well as the minister in his community, courageous, eccentric, and as is obvious from his poetry, sensuous to the point of prurience.

Karl Keller has written a challenging study, which is remarkable chiefly because it dares to draw a portrait of the man from the evidence of his poetry. It is likely that this portrait has exaggerated Taylor's more grotesque qualities. Professor Keller has noticed an obsession with erotic and scatological imagery in Taylor's religious verse, the macabre nature of which he attributes to their author's impassioned identity with language. For Taylor, "the Word is also the word . . . language is action". Furthermore, Keller cites evidence from the painfully introspective "Meditations" to demonstrate a sporadic yet desperate struggle with carnality. Taylor's feverish faith, says Keller, a faith that gave him intrepidity in the wilderness and strength to outlive all but one of his fourteen children, was forged in torment. He was a figure who would have fascinated Hawthorne. He could pass for a character in Faulkner. Flannery O'Connor would have seized upon him instantly for her caste of psychopaths.

Unfortunately, Professor Keller is not possessed of the literary genius of any of those authors, so he has felt it necessary to hedge his opinions with a good deal of doubtful argument and academic qualification. His central thesis, however, is a bold one. Taylor, claims Keller, was an exemplary American poet despite his Elizabethan mannerisms, because to him the process of writing was more important than finished works of art. Borrowing from an essay by John A. Kouwenhoven, Keller believes that "process", and the discontent that makes the doing of anything more gratifying than the thing done, is a dynamic characteristic of American civilization. In Taylor's case, for whom the act of writing was a way of approaching God, was the first American poet.

Having stated this and other ideas related to it as early as the third chapter, the onus is on Professor Keller to prove, in the rest of his book, that he is right.

His arguments are fascinating, but not always convincing. There is no question that Taylor's wit, in some ways a sick wit, and his *Metrical History of Christianity*—Professor Keller says it should be called *Taylor's Book of Christian Horrors*—positively revels in excoriating Christian martyrdoms. Here are killings, rapes, disfigurings, burnings, dismemberments enough to satisfy any modern film director. As Keller remarks, sadism restored Taylor's faith. So did masochism. In the "Preparatory Meditations" Taylor stretched his imagination to describe the "Untwill" and "nasty Dunghills" of his moral condition.

Oh! I'm base, lis true.
My Heart's a Swamp, Brake, Thicket vile of Sin.
My Head's a Bog of Filth; Blood hain'd doth spew
It's venom streaks of Poyson o're my Skin.
My Members Dung-Carts that bedung at pleasure,
My Life, the Pasture where Hells Hurdloons leasure.

In contrast, Taylor's images of salvation and of union with Christ are erotic.

Lord, let thy glorious Body send such rayes
Into my Soule, as ravish shall my heart,
That Thoughts now they bright . . . Glory out shall blaze
Upon my body, may such Rayes (to thee dart.'

Scatological and sexual imagery is not, of course, unusual in religious poetry. What is exceptional about Taylor's verses, Professor Keller believes, is that they are neither ascetic nor mystical: His scatology is eschatological. Images of dung and ravishment give him hope for a sensuous *worldly* relationship with Christ the Lover. If this is so, then Taylor's theology is more like Whitman's than anyone has yet supposed. Also, though Keller never suggests this, Taylor's work is similar, surely, to Robert Lowell's. Here are the same clenched lines and jagged rhythms we find in the self-persecuting language of "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket".

Indeed, in his commentary, Professor Keller sometimes makes Taylor sound more like a twentieth-century doubter than a seventeenth-century divine. He gives little space to the plentiful domestic imagery in Taylor's verse. And it is hard to think of Taylor as a "myth-maker" when Keller defines myth as "that abstract relation of things which would not let existence become meaningless . . . a structure which alone could provide his possibilities of meaning". The words "meaning" and "meaninglessness" are the vocabulary of Sartre's theology, not Calvin's. Nor does Professor Keller make an adequate case for calling Taylor a "Puritan humanist". Taylor was no more a humanist than Cotton Mather. If the act of writing conferred "reality, and autonomy" on the "persona" of Taylor's meditations and kept him from the universal by "tying him to the properties of the world"—which is *what Keller says—then what was the purpose of the whole Calvinist exercise? Surely the whole point of religious asceticism was to achieve union with the universal.* So when Professor Keller says that writing was important to Taylor, not as the beginning of a relationship with God but because Taylor needed grace in order to write, he is making the mistake of supposing that writing was to Taylor what it is to many authors today—a substitute for religion. In Taylor's case this simply could not have been so. What Taylor's subconscious was up to is another question, of course, but one that the language of literary criticism may not be equipped to answer. A novelist might do better. But then a novelist is licensed to trend where academics dare not rush in.

Bulgars and Byzantines

By J. J. Wilkes

DAVID MARSHALL LANG:
The Bulgarians
From Pagan Times to the Ottoman Conquest
208pp. Thames and Hudson. £8.50.

On Monday morning last between four and five o'clock, I was rattling down from Euston station through the calm and silent streets of London, when there was not a footfall to disturb them. Every house looked so still, that it might well have been a receptacle of the dead. But as I came through these long lines of streets, I felt it to be an inspiring and a noble thought that in every one of these houses there were intelligent human beings, my fellow-countrymen, who when they woke would give many of their earliest thoughts, aye and some of their most energetic actions, to the terrors and sufferings of Bulgaria.

Thus wrote Mr Gladstone in his journal during September 1876. Already smouldering from the ill-reported massacres of Christian Slavs in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the previous year, British outrage at the barbaric cruelties inflicted by the Ottomans on the Christian insurgents in Bulgaria was ignited by the speeches of Gladstone and his supporters at public meetings throughout the kingdom. The protest became a serious embarrassment to the government of Disraeli, which sought to preserve the Ottoman Empire as a barrier to Russian expansion. By the time Bulgaria was created an independent state in 1878, largely as the result of a Russian invasion of Turkey in Europe, many had come to appreciate the heritage of Christian peoples in south-east Europe who had been submerged for the five centuries since the Ottoman invasions of Europe at the end of the fourteenth century.

The seven concise chapters of D. M. Lang's new book survey the history and achievements of the Bulgarians from the first appearance of Old Great Bulgaria north-east of the Black Sea in the sixth century AD to the end of the last vestige of Bulgarian independence in 1396, when Sultan Bayazid deposed the dynast Ivan Stratsimir from his fortress at Vidin on the Danube. Bulgarian history throughout most of this period was dominated by the Byzantine emperors at Constantinople, into whose realm the Turkic-speaking proto-Bulgars under Khan Asparukh had migrated in the years 679-81. Within a generation his successor Khan Tervel was involved in restoring the deposed emperor Justinian II to his throne, while a century later the mighty Khan Krum destroyed the imperial army of Nicephoritis. Although a new palace for the ruler was built at Pliska and a new city and future capital founded at Great Preslav under Omurtag "the Builder" and his successors in the ninth century, the spiritual bankruptcy and social backwardness of the traditional paganism became manifest.

The courage of Christian martyrs in Bulgaria, who suffered at the hands of the pagan priests (shamans) and nobles (bolyars), brought home to the rulers of Bulgaria how the enduring power of Byzantium was underwritten by a divine authority and sustained by a supreme pontiff. Soon after his accession in 852 Khan Boris proclaimed his conversion and became Prince (Kynaz) Boris-Michael. Soon the new capital at Great Preslav, already adorned with churches and monasteries by Boris-Michael, witnessed the elevation to the throne of the monk Symeon, during whose long reign (893-927) the First Bulgarian Empire enjoyed its greatest days. In 925 Symeon took the title of emperor and in the following year asserted the independence of the Bulgarian church under its own patriarch against the supremacy of Constantinople. Later in the tenth century, following a period of prolonged warfare, 1,500 pounds of Byzantine gold induced the Russian prince Svyatoslav to attack Bulgaria and seize the capital, although soon afterwards an imperial expedition had to be sent to drive him back across the Danube.

The Byzantine final solution to the persistent refusal of the Bulgarians to allow their national identity to be swallowed by Universal Rome was unspeakably barbaric. When the forces of the last effective ruler of the First Bulgarian Empire had been reduced by bribery to all but the most loyal, they were attacked by an imperial expedition in 1014. Fourteen thousand Bulgarian prisoners were blinded, except for one man in each hundred who was allowed to keep an eye to lead the rest home, an action which ensured immortality for the emperor Basil II's proud title of "Bulgarslayer" (Bulgaroktonos).

Late in the twelfth century, when Byzantium faced invasion from the west, Bulgaria revived. Under Tsar Ivan Assen (1218-41) the Second Bulgarian Empire, was based on more secure foundations than the first. With papal encouragement a new autonomous Bulgarian patriarchate had been created in 1204 at the capital Tnovo; it survived until the Ottoman conquest and was restored after Bulgarian independence in 1878. Although taxation was based on Byzantine practice, for the first time a Bulgarian ruler struck his own gold and silver coinage, in the fashion of Venice and Byzantium (see Professor Lang's plate 55). A network of rather primitive roads between the Adriatic and the Black Sea came into use, and a merchants' quarter grew up in the capital.

After four chapters of narrative the fifth chapter in Professor Lang's book is devoted to the Bogomil heresy, a movement which had a profound effect on the political and religious life of Bulgaria. Its local roots in Bulgaria may have lain in an attachment to the pagan traditions suppressed after the adoption of Christianity, although it seems clear that the teaching of the mysterious priest Bogomil drew on older heresies of eastern origin still persisting in the Byzantine world. What had emerged by the middle of the tenth century was a dualist faith centred on a belief in the inherent evil of the existing world, and in particular of its established institutions. Its blunt rationalism towards such rituals as infant baptism and Holy Communion appealed to the Slav peasantry of the Balkans; as a result there grew up a lasting social and religious alienation from the established church and state of Bulgaria. This served to undermine the First Empire when threatened by Byzantium but, equally, sustained rebellions against the imposed religious and secular rule from Constantinople. Later it worked against the Serbian Empire and certainly contributed to the rapid Ottoman conquests further west in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where Bogomil communities were continually attacked at papal instigation.

A chapter on literature and learning traces how the creation of a written Slavonic by the missionary Cyril made possible the flourishing school of literature at Great Preslav under Symeon. Here Greek works were translated into Old Bulgarian and local churchmen soon began to produce original contributions to the literature and scholarship of the Orthodox church. Apart from some stone carvings, metal objects and pottery, little has survived from the pagan era, and the chapter on art and architecture pays closer attention to the remains of buildings from the First Empire, notably the palace at Pliska and the churches at Great Preslav. In the decorative arts of fresco and manuscript illumination one may detect in Bulgaria a reflection of the political experience to the extent that, although Byzantine influences are everywhere apparent, artists working there persistently asserted the limits of a separate national identity.

It is not surprising that the Bogomil heresy has been closely studied by scholars, not only in Bulgaria (by D. Angelov in 1969) but elsewhere (for example in Britain by D. Obolensky in 1948). As a remarkably persistent movement of social protest which at times passed from passive anarchism to militant action, "the menace of the Bogomils provoked a reaction comparable to that inspired by modern Communist parties among regimes in many parts of the world". Yet the wider perspectives of Bulgarian history in the Middle Ages should not be consigned too readily to the undistinguished recreation of scholars and antiquarians. However dominated by the culture of Byzantium (and the Second Empire was in many ways more Byzantinized than the first) the Bulgarians, through tenacious assertion of a national identity, undermined the persisting notion that the Byzantine Empire was an institution under divine protection which would, sooner or later, see its boundaries coincide with those of the civilized inhabited world. It may be hardly credible that recollection of achievements in the tenth and thirteenth centuries could be significant in modern political attitudes. Yet those who would contemplate the likely course of future events in that quarter of Europe would do well to remember Symeon and Ivan Assen, and the achievements of the societies they ruled. To these Professor Lang's new book offers an excellent introduction.

The tell-tale tablets

By A. M. Snodgrass

JOHN CHADWICK:
The Mycenaean World
201pp. Cambridge University Press. £7.50 (paperback, £2.95).

Successful books on the Mycenaeans have been written by non-archaeologists before, but this represents the most thorough (and the most thoroughly un-archaeological) attempt to date. John Chadwick argues that the time is ripe for "a picture of Mycenaean Greece . . . reconstructed from the documentary evidence", and if so, he is certainly the man to paint it. A master of a difficult field, like that of the Linear B tablets, is not often its best popular exponent, but Dr Chadwick is the exception. The qualities of his earlier writing on the subject are all conspicuously present again: exemplary clarity, alertness to external sources of evidence (including the modern Greek world), common sense and, above all, honesty.

Yet paradoxically it is these very qualities which may engender doubt in the reader's mind, as to the soundness of the underlying hypothesis of the book. Is a survey of the Mycenaean world, based on such circumscribed evidence, a desirable or even a feasible aim? As a basis for historical deductions, the Linear B tablets do not compare with the archives surviving from ancient western Asia; indeed they scarcely really archive at all, but are ephemeral lists and accounts.

Being records of a single year in the case of each group of tablets, they fall within strict temporal limits; the chronological and cultural backgrounds of the only two substantial groups, those from Knossos and Pylos, are very different; and even within these limitations, their circumstances of discovery suggest that they cannot remotely approximate to completeness.

All these shortcomings, except perhaps the last, are freely acknowledged by Dr Chadwick; does the value of his results transcend them? Do the Linear B tablets, however expertly interpreted, provide an answer or even an access to the central questions which should dominate the study of the Mycenaeans?

Dr Chadwick's own candour, in setting out each step in the argument, and in acknowledging the frankly conjectural elements as well as the alternative interpretations, goes far to show that the answers are uncertain and the access precarious. Of course, the same is true of much archaeological inference. But are there enough Greek words of convincing identification and interpretation, in the whole Linear B corpus, to make it into "solid historical evidence"?

Some of the orthodox readings lend to results of the wildest improbability; Dr Chadwick wisely rejects octopuses climbing trees but is prepared to stand by the 400 bronze-smiths of Pylos, and the 7,500 litres of coriander at Knossos. Clearly, this is a field in which the closest collaboration between several disciplines, and not just the two obvious ones, is essential if real progress is to be made and a consensus achieved.

Dr Chadwick claims to have "drawn heavily" on the archaeological sources as well as the documentary. But in his justifiably short bibliography some three-quarters of the entries are from the field of Linear B scholarship; many of them highly specialized. The balance of the book is also exemplified by a curiously bare-looking map of the Aegean, in a double-page spread at the beginning; it marks only sixteen sites, mostly chosen for their probable occurrence in the texts. From the start, where the period is described as "until recently the jealously guarded preserve of the archaeologists", there is a spirit of challenge about much of the writing.

There are passages which discuss much archaeological material, such as the single sentence on page 132 which disposes of Mycenaean meat-consumption as something which took place "probably only on special occasions"; or an extended discussion of the Pylos armour tablets on pages 152-3 which nowhere even entertains the view, current among archaeologists for a dozen years and adopted by the latest authority, Paola Cassola Guida, that the corslets listed at Pylos are entirely non-metallic. There are places where, to suit the model of the decipherment acting as catalyst to archaeological refurbishment, the historical sequence of discovery seems to have been distorted (as in the discussion of the Knossos "Warrior Graves" on page 159).

Yet, given its chosen method and aim, the book displays sincere respect; it is hard to imagine the task being discharged better.

Malefactors in their milieu

By Terence Morris

JOHN BALDWIN and A. E. BOTTOMS in collaboration with Monica Walker:
The Urban Criminal
262pp. Tavistock. £6.50 (paperback, £3.40).

During the late 1960s the University of Sheffield decided that within its faculty of law, criminology should be a growth point, and it is remarkable that in a period during which almost every university in the country has seen hopes for growth dashed in an atmosphere of gloom, criminology has actually continued to grow at Sheffield. It would be probably true to say that the Sheffield Centre, for all that it is located within a law faculty, has not been dominated by a narrowly legal approach to research.

Not that the sociological character of this particular book is likely to endear it to the "New" criminologists, who are likely to perceive in it so many of the features of the positivist tradition which the New Criminology has been at such pains to discredit. To dismiss *The Urban Criminal* as being yet one more study to demonstrate the near-obvious in a style that has more in common with social administration than sociology would be less than fair, and against the weight of the evidence. There is, one must regret, a real danger that a Marxist approach to the sociology of crime exclusive of all others could result in the field looking like a collection of ruins among which a Brandenburg Gate, topped by the Red Flag, alone remains outstanding.

The intending reader may, of course, be perplexed by this defence of the work against criticisms which may not have been made, but this is because in criminology no less than in any other intensively inbred specialism, the intellectual pedigree is not unimportant. In the case of two of the authors their earlier work has been in Cambridge, and there are some critics who would take the view that having been associated with its once dominant Institute of Criminology ought to be regarded generously as a kind of spent conviction. There are, of course, grave dangers in passing judgment upon a contemporaneous event on the basis of past events, and it is certainly the case that *The Urban Criminal* departs considerably from the characteristics of the statistically dominated studies of a decade or so ago. Its authors are numerate, but at the same time they are clearly aware of the main directions of current theories in the sociology of crime and deviance. For that reason alone the book is worth while in that it indicates an openness of mind in the interpretation of the research data.

The importance of studying crime in the urban context has been recognized for a long time; indeed as a social fact its significance antedated the emergence of criminology as such. Elizabethan and Stuart London, and then Georgian and Victorian London in turn, provided both a literary and later a scientific focus in respect of crime. And whether the sources are those of Defoe and Dickens or Colquhoun and Mayhew, it emerges that in the urban situation crime takes on a special quality that is absent elsewhere; its persistence in the face of determined efforts at law enforcement relates not merely to an organizational infrastructure that makes crime an economically viable activity, but to the existence of subcultures of crime and delinquency that ensure the social transmission of criminal values and techniques from one generation to another. To a very great extent so far as industrial societies are concerned, crime is to all intents and purposes an urban phenomenon. But, as the authors of this book argue, "the specific urban and areal dimensions of the social processes that are connected with crime have been seriously understated in much recent criminological work". It is this theme which is taken up in the introductory essay with which the book begins and it will probably be this section which will be most read by students seeking a theoretical critique long after the data on contemporary Sheffield have ceased to have other than social historical interest.

It is this part of the book which will probably give most offence to the New Criminologists, since it begins with a consideration of the statistical aspects of crime and urbanism. Now the difficulty here is that the shortcomings of criminal statistics are so numerous as to suggest that they may be unreliable aids to social policy, let alone unsound foundations for social theory. In fact it can be said with some confidence that the processes of definition and recording are more important in terms of what they tell us about those who design the categories, collect the data and analyse them than in terms of the phenomena they allegedly describe. A. E. Bottoms and his colleagues, rather than pitch out crime statistics altogether as being but useless rubbish, recognize their notorious unreliability but suggest that it is better to begin with officially recorded data and then look at research that has attempted to "get behind" the recorded data in the form of victim and self-report studies.

The essay also considers the important questions which arise in connection with theories of urbanism—the contrast between urban and rural life and the ecological tradition which was central to the great Chicago school half a century ago. Much more interesting is that part which deals with the potential for research contained in newer concepts such as that of "housing class" (developed by John Rex and Robert Moore) and "social space" as considered by such writers as Marvin B. Scott and Stanford M. Lyman. Such concepts permit of the analysis of urban crime and associated problems of urban culture which is of greater degree of sophistication than was possible either by the Chicago school or indeed by post-war researchers. Variables such as social class and population density, even when refined, did not assist in explaining how broadly similar areas of cities demonstrated widely differing rates of crime and delinquency. And although the concept of social space was probably adumbrated in some of the earlier studies of gangs, the notion of space, especially *defensible* space, had to await the development of high-rise dwellings with all their anomic characteristics before it became clear that it was more relevant in understanding aggressive deviance, such as continuous vandalism or stairway robbery than, say, social class.

The discussion of "housing class" in relation to the location and allocation policies of the Sheffield Housing Department, and the variations of offender rates in terms of areas characterized by different forms of tenure, is especially interesting in that it demonstrates that research into housing matters is not just a matter for social administration. One of the conclusions drawn by the authors is that the policy of selling council houses will result in the reinforcement of the unfavourable reputation of the "problem" estates on which few houses will be sold. This in turn, they fear, will accelerate the processes as a result of which high crime and offender rates will become the fruit of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The Urban Criminal is a report on the first stage of the Sheffield Study on Urban Social Structure and Crime and this volume may be said to be a kind of ground-clearing operation. The conclusions of the next stage of the researches should prove to be interesting, especially in respect of the ways in which housing policy affects the content of local neighbourhood cultures.

The book is extremely useful in that it considers at some length the very necessary connection that must be made between social policy and social theory. We already perceive among the cliff dwellings that have arisen after the bulldozers have torn the heart out of so many of our major cities, the social dereliction that is inevitably to follow, and it is not sufficient that a *raison d'être* for the intervention of a bureaucratized system of welfare is thus provided. Future social historians will be able to chart the disastrous failures of "planning" that neglected to consider human needs. The sad thing is that "planners", be they officials or elected members of local authorities, are unlikely to spend much time reading books that are as useful and sensible as this one.

Job Satisfaction (254pp. Macmillan. £10) presents the findings of twenty-one recent studies on the subject, most of them American. The relation of satisfaction in work to environmental factors, organizational structure, personal differences such as age, sex and educational standard, as well as its effect on performance and output, are all considered. Michael M. Gruneberg as editor provides brief introductions to each section of the book.

The poverty barrier

By David Wall

JOHN COLE:
The Poor of the Earth
144pp. Macmillan. £7.95 (paperback, £2.95).

The Poor of the Earth is a curious book. Macmillan advertise it as having been commissioned by the International Labour Organization and the World Employment Conference held in Geneva in June of this year. It is clearly not a conference document, however, and the author insists that it was written for the "man in the street". Presumably, then, it was intended as a public relations exercise to bring home to that man in the street the importance of the World Employment Conference which has on its agenda "one of the most important human and political controversies in the world today". It fails to achieve this objective. Despite the easy *Time/Newsweek* level of journalism on which the skimpy 144 pages are written it never becomes clear what the author considers this controversy to be. While he does identify many of what most observers would agree are the "underlying issues of world politics in the next quarter century", John Cole does not, as Macmillan's flyer asserts, make them comprehensible.

The problem with the book is that it never rises above the anecdotal plane. It comes across as a latter-day version of such classic vignettes of imperial days as *Half Hours in the Far East*. Mr Cole's method is to introduce some aspect of what he calls the "two obscenities"—the contrast between rich and poor countries, and that between rich and poor people in poor countries—and gloss it with anecdotal detail (the problems of developing low-cost housing in East Africa) and with comments from colourful locals and wise officials in international agencies, such as the World Bank. Having then "defined" the issue he goes on to outline some wonderful remedy which "officials" in the International Labour Organization or World Bank have come up with and then sighs that if only some miracle or other were to be achieved the world would be a better place.

As a specialist, the book is infuriatingly jejune and its consent [illegible] The overall impression given is that Mr Cole believes that perhaps belatedly, the International Labour Organization and World Bank have all the technical solutions to the problems of development but are prevented from effectively implementing them by a variety of people, institutions or countries whose interest would be harmed by the emergence of a better world.

Some of us believe that some of the problems faced by developing countries are caused by, or accentuated by, those two international agencies and their operatives. Even if this impression is dismissed, as perhaps it should be, as the biased view of a specialist, it is still legitimate to complain that the book is long on "if only" and short, very short, on "how". Of course it would be nice *if only* the rich apartment dwellers in Bombay were to be taxed on their use of municipally provided water in their own homes in order to finance the provision of one public tap every half kilometre in the slums, but *how* are state and centre governments which depend on the support of the rich apartment dwellers to be persuaded to implement such a scheme? It would also make for a better world if only politicians and powerful civil servants in Kenya could be persuaded to redistribute the large areas of prime agricultural land they have appropriated to landless peasants, but *how* do you persuade people to cut their own throats?

It may be that after two decades of research, although it has been [illegible] the research programmes of the International Labour Organization and World Bank have been particularly superficial), we are better able to articulate the problems faced by poor countries, but we are still a long way from being able to agree even on the selection of criteria which we could use to recognize solutions to them.

If the man in the street does pick up this expensive book then he will get a quick overview of the issues fashionable delegates to international conferences on development chat about among themselves and he will also get a survey of the topics on which overpaid (a third obscenity?) officials in the plush offices of the International Labour Organization and World Bank write papers about. He will, however, be left with no clear idea about either what in general *should* be done about "one of the most important human and political controversies in the world today" or what in particular he can do about it himself.

TLS Commentary

The Delacroix of costume

This year, the Fine Art Society's Edinburgh Festival Exhibition is devoted to Léon Bakst. It is an important and attractive show. Most of the exhibits come from British, American and Russian collections, although the Russians, running true to form, have not yet delivered their contribution. Many of the exhibits have not been seen in public before. There is an interesting selection of portraits, illustrations, fashion and textile designs. There is even a splendid costume design for a review called *Hullo Tango*. (One critic though it ought to be renamed "That You, Bakst?"). But most of the space is devoted to his work for Diaghilev and the Ballet Russe. The designs for *Cléopâtre* and *Schéhérazade* which established his reputation as a master of the exotic, and the selection of designs for *The Sleeping Beauty* and for the abortive production of *La Boutique Fantasque* are particularly notable.

Bakst's contemporary reputation rested primarily on his being the "Delacroix of costume". An American critic talked of "emerald, indigo, and geranium; the leopard's spot and the scales of the serpent; black, rose, vermilion and triumphant orange were all shrieking to be heard and shrieking in harmony. There was an orgy of colour to the last possible tension". This particular quality is not always apparent in this exhibition, partly because some of the colours have lost their original brilliance, partly because costume designs never make sense until they are made up and shown on stage on the right set with the right lighting. Nevertheless one still gets an extraordinarily vivid idea of the spirit of Bakst. Stage and costume designs are usually only sets of technical instructions for the stage staff and seamstresses. But Bakst often worked his designs up into pictures of exotic people who happened to be wearing exotic costumes. Sometimes he did this to persuade a recalcitrant ballerina that she would look good in a costume, sometimes he did it for fun after the production had opened, rather than though he were making illustrations of the stage spectacle he had created.

These pictures show Bakst as a master of the complex. There is not a straightforward design among them. Simple lines are never used if complex ones will do. Decoration is never used except in voluptuous profusion. And everything is held together by a brilliant palette of violently contrasted colours. But what brings these drawings alive are the exotic people who wear them. Some are ravishingly beautiful, some are grotesque, all of them are curious, interesting and irredeemably sexy. The voluptuously contorted body of Judith fondling the hideous head of Holofernes, the languid, effeminate face and body, the squat, powerful legs and feet of an exotic Arabian prince as perfectly capture the spirit of Bakst's world as the extraordinary costumes they wear. What these pictures also show is that Bakst saw costume as a means of dramatizing the body rather than concealing it, by emphasizing all its most striking features no matter how bizarre they might be, and emphasizing above all its sexuality.

This makes Bakst sound like a caricaturist and, to judge from his portraits, that is certainly what he was. When his portraits are straightforward, they are flat and undistinguished. When caricature raises its head, they become much more interesting. There are brilliant caricatures of himself and Picasso and a delightful sketch of Isadora Duncan, all charm and innocence in spite of her disastrously constructed bottom.

Bakst was nothing if not a festive designer and this attractively hung exhibition is just the thing for the Edinburgh Festival. Those who cannot see it there will have a chance to do so when it moves to London next month or to America in the winter. Charles Mayer, in his scholarly and informative catalogue, makes the interesting suggestion that it would be worth studying Bakst's influence on Florenz Ziegfeld, Cecil B. De Mille and Hollywood in general. What an exhibition that would make.

Costume design by Bakst for an Arabian prince with a Negro pageboy, 1916: from the Fine Art Society's exhibition in Edinburgh.

Prince Affie in Africa

Queen Victoria owned to "a great fear of young and carefully brought up Boys mixing with older Boys and indeed with any Boys in general, for the mischef done by bad boys and the things they may hear and learn from them cannot be overrated". And what was her second boy, fifteen-year-old Prince Alfred ("Affie"), doing on August 21, 1860? The young "ambassador" was in the saddle at Hartebeestehoek, in the Orange Free State, covered with blood, shooting and spearing at a turbulent concentration of big game—an occasion described by an officer in attendance as "that glorious day when we killed six hundred head of game, all larger than horses". Another observer estimated a thousand dead. Whatever the tally, it was a great Roman spectacle and just the thing to keep a young prince away from bad boys.

The adventures on the veldt of "Affie" later Duke of Edinburgh, are told by Theo Aronson in his *Royal Ambassadors: British Royalties in Southern Africa, 1860-1947* (144pp. Cassell. £3.75), a work of more liveliness and allure than its title might suggest. The rigours of the midshipman regime were also endured by that ill-fated prince, Albert Victor (Eddy) and his brighter brother Prince George (George V) aboard HMS Bacchante, in which they visited South Africa in 1881. Eddy was slow-witted and intensely inert; it is hard to imagine him pulling his weight in a massacre. Neither prince helped much with the diary of the tour. When George wrote, "We passed an ostridge farm and saw a good many ostridges", it was left to the tutor, the Rev John Dalton, to expand this aperçu into "a four-page dissertation on the appearance, habits, use and profitability of ostriches".

Both princes were asleep when the Flying Dutchman was sighted on July 11, 1881 and Mr Dalton had to write that up too. Prince George, as Duke of York, became more diary-conscious on his next South African visit, in 1901, when he recorded that he and Princess May travelled 45,000 miles, laid twenty-one foundation stones, received 544 addresses, presented 4,329 medals and shook hands, officially, with 24,855 people. There were compensations, however; De Beers presented Princess May with 600 diamonds. The Boer War was still in progress and one of Queen Victoria's grandsons lay in his grave in Pretoria. In 1904, just before his mother, Princess Christian, visited South Africa two mysterious attempts were made to steal the body.

The string of royal ambassadors could not prevent the eventual breach between South Africa and the Crown. Nevertheless, Mr Aronson thanks them for spreading an exhilarating and indefinable magic. In 1925 the Prince of Wales left such a legend that "for years after the visit, proud husbands would claim that their sons, or daughters, had been fathered by the Prince".

Fifty Years on . . .

Mr Graves, in his Essay on the Future of Poetry asserts the intrinsic virtue of poetry to be that "its rhythms, rhyme, and wording have a toxic effect on the nervous system". Heightened in their receptivity by the music of Verse, our minds open to worlds of association suggested by the sound or history of the words used by the poet; and the more powerful the toxic effect, the wider and deeper these associations range and the further they are capable of taking us from conventional meaning. Explicit recognition of these influences will lead, has led already, Mr Graves thinks, to "new developments in poetry corresponding to Cubism in graphic art: to a "poetry of relativity" which will have no subject but the human mind itself and will consist wholly of an imaginative creation of "atmosphere". He quotes Miss Laura Riding Gottshalk to substantiate the claim (we condense her somewhat needlessly emphatic expression of it):—

> The elder poets of England and America are still worshipping that old god experience . . . But who thus ever learns anything from experience? Development comes through self-exercise, not through being hammered upon. The function of the new poetic mind is inductive. The poet is the maker of beauty, since all form originates in him. Confronted by a terrifying, absorbing, fascinating universe, he does not permit himself to be overcome by it, but answers it in a recreated universe of his own, a universe defiantly intelligible.

As a rule, it is true, the fascination of the light of poetry rivets attention and leads us to attend too little to he machinery of its production; but the danger of attending to the machinery for its own sake is that a change in the arrangement and reciprocity of the parts, which may be very interesting and ingenious mechanically, is, if it deprives us of the light-producing current, poetically useless. "So Miss Sitwell speaks of 'clucking flowers', meaning 'flowers hen' down so that they seem like a hen clucking'"—well, that is Mr Graves's interpretation. Possibly she did not mean anything of the kind. There are plenty that discharge their seeds in the heat with a sound which, it is true, does not in the least resemble clucking, but is nearer to it than the analogy of the hen. For hens, after all, cluck in all positions and there is nothing in the word which suggests one attitude more than another. "Clucking flowers" may be a piece of brilliant illumination, when Miss Sitwell uses it; Mr Graves may have done her an injustice in wrenching it from its context; but quoted as an example of the new possibilities in poetry, it strikes one as proving rather to what a pitch of irrelevancy the ingenuities of the mechanical mind may attain.

Robert Graves's Another Future of Poetry *was reviewed, together with Vernon Lee's* The Poet's Eye *and Laurence Binyon's* Tradition and Reaction in Modern Poetry, *by Basil de Sellincourt in the TLS of August 26, 1926.*

On the track of B. Traven

By George Woodcock

MICHAEL BAUMANN:
B. Traven: An Introduction
184pp. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. $9.50.

Not only is the lore of B. Traven complex; it also differs significantly between the United States and Europe. For example, Traven's books were written originally in German. These German versions were translated in Britain by English writers; for publication in the United States they were translated, as Arthur Calder-Marshall once said, into "American as she was never spoke" by Traven himself, who made changes and added embellishments which he thought might make them acceptable to his new public.

Similarly, the identification of Traven has followed different courses in different countries. It was with editors in Germany, not in the United States, that Traven first established contact from Mexico. In 1953, in Mexico City, Augustin Souchy—who had come there as a refugee from the Spanish Civil War—told me that in 1923, when he was working on *Der Sprutkatist* in Berlin, a letter arrived from an unknown writer named "B. Traven"; five years later, in the German magazine *Geist und Tat* in 1958, Souchy was to commit this fact to print. It appears to have been Traven's first appearance, at least under that name, and his novels and stories, with their obvious libertarian inclinations, aroused great interest in anarchist and syndicalist circles in Germany throughout the period up to the Nazi assumption of power.

The poet Erich Muehsam identified Traven with a former comrade who went by the name of Ret Marut, had once been an actor, had participated as an associate of Gustav Landauer in the Munich Räterepublik of 1919, and, after editing on the run a radical journal called *Der Ziegelbrunner* (The Brickmaker), had vanished from Germany in the early months of 1922. Certainly by the time I talked to Souchy and other European refugees in Mexico City the identification of Traven with Marut seemed to be accepted, on the grounds of textual and ideological similarities, by German critical opinion, and recent studies by scholars like the East German Rolf Recknagel made it virtually impossible to doubt that Marut became Traven. In a disappearing from Germany and surfacing under a new name elsewhere he was only following the example of another German writer with whom he may well have been acquainted, the man of letters Felix Paul Greve who, after being imprisoned for fraud in Bonn, disappeared in 1909 (leaving clues—but no body—that suggested suicide) and surfaced in Canada in 1912 as Frederick Philip Grove, later to become one of his adopted country's best-known novelists.

Until as late as 1967 American readers only received slight hints of the fact that Traven and Marut might be the same person—or projections of the same person; up to that time there had been speculations directed towards American origins, identifying the novelist with a middle-western farmer's son of Scandinavian extraction named Traven Torsvan, and later with a certain Hal Croves, a self-styled American cowboy with a strong German accent who posed in Mexico as Traven's agent. In 1967, in a pair of articles published in *Romparts*, a Californian journalist named Judy Stone, who had posed some very searching questions to Hal Croves, finally established that Ret Marut, B. Traven, Traven Torsvan and Hal Croves were all masks for the same person. Who the original man behind these masks may have been she was not able to establish, nor has any other writer succeeded.

Michael L. Baumann's new book *B. Traven: An Introduction* builds upon this belated reconciliation of the European and the American images of Traven. But his title is misleading; it is not in fact an introduction of any kind. If we expect to be introduced to the real, original Traven, we are disappointed. Marut, Torsvan and Croves, as Baumann admits, are all absent from any known birth records. And if we expect an introduction to Traven's writings, we are equally frustrated, for Baumann devotes most of his textual analysis to a single book, *Das Totenschiff* (*The Death Ship*), and, apart from brief mentions, relegates the remaining score of books in the Traven canon to a scanty descriptive appendix.

Once one has taken account of the appendixes—there is another which rather superfluously paraphrases the doctrines of Max Stirner—and the exhaustive bibliography of books and other material by and about Traven, *B. Traven: An introduction* boils down to a long essay of 115 pages in which, fashionably disclaiming biographical intent, Baumann discusses a series of Traven problems whose implications are inescapably as much biographical as critical.

Almost mandatorily, his first chapter is entitled "Who Was B. Traven?" and summarizes the information that has been gathered up to date regarding Traven's life". It is evident that from the beginning "Traven" was a mystifier, and that "Ret Marut" was certainly not the name by which he was known in childhood. But even when he has accepted that Marut and Traven are two masks for the same unknown, one biographical problem that nags Baumann is that of reconciling what we know of Marut-Traven's movements with the extraordinary flow of books he sent to Germany in the later 1920s. Between 1925 and 1929 he published in Germany no less than five novels, apart from a number of short stories. Apart from *Der Totenschiff*, whose American drifter hero Gales reappears in later novels, all these books deal with the life of American migratory workers—mostly Wobblies—in Mexico, and they show a close knowledge both of the terrain and of the kind of life which such drifters followed.

How could a writer coming newly to a strange land and, according to his account, contending with chronic poverty, experience and write so much in so short a time? To solve that question, Baumann takes over the theory of a Swiss writer, Max Schmid, who in 1963-64 published in the Zurich *Tages-Anzeiger* a series of articles arguing that two people were involved, at least in the Traven novels of the 1920s: Marut, arriving in Mexico as a émigré intellectual, and a mysterious and barely literate American migratory worker who in his wandering through the oil fields and the cotton-fields had written a number of unpublishable novels about his experiences. Marut got his hands on Torsvan's manuscripts—or so Schmid suggests—and turned them into acceptable works, which he then peddled to German publishers, afterwards translating them into his own kind of English for the American market. The later Traven novels, especially the series about Indian mahogany workers and their rebellions in southern Mexico, of which *The Rebellion of the Hanged* is the most familiar to English readers, may well, according to this theory, have been written by Marut himself after he had gathered more first-hand knowledge of Mexican life.

The rest of *B. Traven: An Introduction*—though it presents some very interesting ideas, is oriented around the need to prove that to the four known personae of Traven we have to add also the mysterious migratory worker, the *Erlebnisträger* (carrier of experience); before I give my reasons for suggesting that this is a quite unnecessary complication, ripe for Occam's razor, let me summarize briefly the remaining chapters. Chapter 2 discusses the question of whether Traven was in fact a "proletarian writer"; Baumann concludes, not only that Traven did, not in the Marxist sense identify with the proletariat as a class, but also that he was not even a worker in the sense accepted in left-wing circles, but an intellectual, perhaps to be identified—though here the links are of the most tenuously unconvincing kind—with an American theological student named Charles Trefoy, expelled from the University of Freiburg in 1903 for "indecent actions". Chapter 3 discusses the nature of Traven's anarchism, making it clear that there is no shred of communism or socialism in the generally understood sense in any of the novels, and suggesting that the libertarianism which permeates everything Traven wrote is of the extreme individualist kind, derived almost entirely from Max Stirner, of whom we know that Ret Marut was a great admirer. Chapter 4, on "The Language Question", is the key chapter, and undoubtedly the most valuable, whether or not one accepts the theory of the *Erlebnisträger*, since it helps greatly not only to illuminate Traven's personal background, but also to appreciate his novels in formal terms. The final chapter, perhaps the weakest, discusses whether Traven can be regarded as "an American writer" in the sense of belonging in the same tradition as Melville and Hemingway.

What Baumann, himself bilingual in English and German, shows convincingly in Chapter 4, by detailed example from *Der Totenschiff* and its American translation, is that Traven's German is much better than his American English, but that his German is nevertheless not quite that of a native. He handles the language, as one German critic said, with great malleability, but he is constantly introducing English words or literal translations of American colloquial phrases rather than their German equivalents; this accords with the known fact that Ret Marut spoke German well, but with a slight accent, so that he was evidently born outside Germany. Traven's English, on the other hand, in the translations he himself made, is distinctly Germanic in tone and in sentence formation; as Arthur Calder-Marshall said, "the slang is American, but used as a foreigner might use it. The thought is middle European". Baumann suggests the reason for this "Germanic quality of Traven's English" is that, having as Marut written in German for so many years he "found it difficult to switch back into English", all this on the assumption that Marut was American-born. But in fact it does not really take much practice for someone who has spoken a language from childhood to the verges of adulthood to return to writing it quite fluently and accurately even after many years of using another language.

We have to assume, then, that English was not Marut-Traven's childhood language and—despite the smoke-screen of denials Hal Croves put up in the 1950s—that German was. This brings one to the passing suggestion of the American poet Kenneth Rexroth, which Baumann mentions only in a footnote, that Traven was in fact a German-American Wobbly. Since Rexroth himself was born into a German-American family, became a Wobbly, and in his pre-literary days knew many of the early Industrial Workers of the World activists, his opinion is worth considering, particularly as it leads one to an alternative possible biography for Marut-Traven which, I suggest, explains the content and the viewpoint of his novels much more effectively than the theory of the *Erlebnisträger*.

If, to begin, we suppose that the man who became Traven was born, under whatever his original name may have been, in a German-speaking American community, this will explain not merely the oddity of his English, but also the kinds of Anglicism that pepper his German—which are precisely the kinds of Anglicism derived from a surrounding and intrusive culture that one encounters in Canadian French. Marut's slight accent when speaking German would then be not that of a foreign-speaker, but, rather of a provincial-speaker, like the accent Parisians immediately notice when a Québecois speaks their common language.

If Marut-Traven was indeed a Wobbly—and the numerous Wobbly-directed allusions in the novels suggest it—this means that he was probably a mutual worker at certain times in his life, but he could easily have been one of those hard-reading and hard-philosophizing workers who were common in the IWW. The evidence Baumann presents in fact suggests that if—as he contends—Traven was an intellectual, he must have been a self-taught one. His favourite authors—as Marut—were Walt Whitman, Jack London, Shelley, Max Stirner and a Danish novelist named Herman Bang. As Traven he showed familiarity with Fenimore Cooper and Upton Sinclair; he certainly read Conrad and Eugene O'Neill, and he almost certainly read Melville and Dana. All these, except Herman Bang, were precisely the writers whom working-class autodidacts with radical inclinations were reading in the early days of the century and carrying in their packs as they wandered in search of jobs over western North America.

That Traven should be a déclassé autodidact, perhaps born on a farm in a German-speaking American settlement, who drifted into manual occupations, would not be inconsistent with his role as Marut, an actor playing small parts in those minor, pre-1914 Central European travelling companies which lived on the verges of the lumpenproletarian world. He may well, during his residence in Germany, have returned as a seaman for periods to the United States and joined the IWW. Thus *Der Totenschiff*, so peculiarly post-1918 European in its use of adventures in Belgium, Holland, France and Spain, may have been substantially complete before Marut left for Mexico. If this was so, the apparent pressure on Traven's first Mexican years appears less intense; and if we assume on the basis of novels like *Die Baumwollpflücker* (originally entitled *Der Wobblie*) that he carried the red IWW card, then a good observing eye and a good ear for the tales of his wandering comrades would suffice to provide the material for those early novels about American drifters in Mexico.

A note on Traven's anarchism: both Marut and Traven were certainly anarchists, yet Baumann goes beyond what the facts available to us justify when he says: "As for Traven, he must never be confused with socialists or communists or even with organized anarchists such as the anarcho-syndicalists, who saw in unionism and the general strike the answers to the problems of the industrial society." Apart from his highly simplistic view of anarcho-syndicalism, Baumann appears to have forgotten that the Wobblies—to whom Traven was so close—were largely inspired by the examples of French and Spanish anarcho-syndicalism, and that they too saw in the "one big union" a way to destroy capitalism.

A final note on Traven as name-juggler. I was struck as I read Baumann's book by the fact that all the four names of Traven's persona were so unusual that I had never encountered them elsewhere. I looked for them in the telephone directory of my city of Vancouver, whose million people include a high proportion of Germans and Scandinavians; Marut, Traven, Torsvan and Croves were all absent. I began to consider that they must all be invented names, and then my wife remarked that Marut was in fact an anagram for *Truum*—or "dream". Playing next with Traven, we discovered the interesting series Traum—Trauen—Traven, reached by simple changes, particularly if one uses longhand. If Traven is taken as an adaptation of *trauen*, the verb "to dare, to adventure" is revealed, which accords with Traven's inclination towards adventurous characters or even mere adventurers, while *Torsvan* (B. Traven) signifies "to entrust" or "to authorize", and Traven is the name to which the unknown author entrusted his work. Torsvan fitted splendidly into the pattern; giving a German rather than an Scandinavian spelling to the same sound, it became *Torswalth*, or "fool's delusion", which not only fits in with *Traum* but echoes the whole theme of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*. As for Hal Croves, his name looks like another anagram, suggesting the role he actually played as Traven's public relations persona: Hal Covers. I have not seen this wordplay noted by previous writers on Traven (Baumann does not appear to have noticed it), but though it leads us nowhere nearer the mysterious real man, it amusingly shows how much ingenuity he felt compelled to exercise in maintaining his—the word comes naturally—cover.

To the Editor

The Electronic Oracle

Sir,—I wish to express my gratitude to N. S. Sutherland for his generally sympathetic review of my book *Computer Power and Human Reason* (July 30). Nevertheless, I do wish to voice some criticisms about certain things he said and some he did not say.

Mr Sutherland appears not to have taken the very first sentence of my book seriously. That sentence is: "*This book is only nominally about computers.*" *I thought of the book as an argument leading finally to the last chapter*: "*Against the Imperialism of Instrumental Reason.*" *I think of imperialism as an actor's attempt to dominate a domain larger than that to which the actor is legitimately entitled.* In this century individuals and groups of human beings have come to be seen increasingly as instruments to be applied to ends determined by others who happen to have power over them. Human reason has increasingly been displaced by calculations in which parameters such as quantifiable costs, efficiency, and so on play a dominant role. In such calculi rationality is often equated with logicality, reason with instrumental reason. This unfortunate development began, as I repeatedly point out in my book, long before the modern computer was invented. The extermination camps, the destruction of Dresden, the American foreign policy with respect to South-East Asia, many of the detailed horrors of what happened in Vietnam—for example the institution of "free fire zones"—all of these were rational "solutions" to "problems" computed according to the calculi against which I wrote. Whether or not they had anything to do with electronic computers is utterly beside the point. I chose to use the computer as the vehicle to carry the main burden of my argument because the computer is at once the starkest possible symbol of these calculi as well as their most concrete *manifestation*. Besides, I am a computer scientist. I believe it important that those actually engaged in potentially dangerous enterprises be among the first to speak to their colleagues and to the public at large.

If there is a single most important lesson my book tries to teach it is: no single metaphor or way of seeing the world, whether it be the computer metaphor, science, religion, some political dogma, or whatever, is sufficient to yield an understanding of the world worthy of the human potential to understand and to predicate action on understanding. That point Mr Sutherland missed altogether. I attack certain sections of the artificial intelligentsia precisely because they too fail to understand the very same point and because they, in many of their public pronouncements, actively deny it.

I do not, as Mr Sutherland asserts, locate the seat of the unconscious and of intuition in the right hemisphere of the human brain: I cite reports that suggest that the right hemisphere may do information processing "in a way entirely different from that which the left hemisphere employs to bring explicable thought to our consciousness. I consider these reports to fortify John Von Neumann's position that "the outward forms of our mathematics are not absolutely relevant from the point of view of evaluating what the mathematical or logical language *truly* used by the central nervous system is". (Emphases Von Neumann's.) If Von Neumann was right on this, and he has been known to be right before, then the most grandiose announced aims of the artificial intelligentsia may not be realizable even in principle. This is not a question, as Mr Sutherland suggests, of whether all human behaviour is "rule following" or not. It is rather a question of whether there may be modalities of rules that we, by virtue of our very biological constitution, can never explicate in terms of the logics we can in principle invent and give to our computers.

Mr Sutherland correctly quotes me as saying that I object to all *projects that propose to substitute a computer system for a human function that involves interpersonal respect, understanding, and love.* But he incorrectly infers that I would "proscribe" (if I but could) the use of computers in, for example, education. What I would proscribe is the substitution of computers for human teachers altogether. No one has, to my knowledge, proposed doing such a thing. But as to the use of computers in education, I must say that I am myself engaged in that both in my research and in my teaching practice. I must also disagree with Mr Sutherland's position that:

> The real reason for not trusting computers to take complex decisions is less that they lack intuition than that they cannot be provided with sufficient general knowledge to deal with exceptional cases. The knowledge with which they can at present be programmed represents only a tiny fraction of the knowledge of an adult. Where complex decisions are required, it is impossible to foresee all the possible circumstances and hence the computation will sometimes fail.

Mr Sutherland seems here to be saying that the difficulty is basically a quantitative one, moreover one that plagues us only "at present". But the real difficulty is that human beings have knowledge that they gain not as a consequence of having been "programmed" but in the process of being socialized. The most important things human beings know they learn from them as a consequence of being human and of having been treated as human beings in human society. The simple truth is that computers are not human.

Finally, to the charge that I do not tell how we are to "find the wisdom to use [computers] sensibly," I plead guilty. I search.

JOSEPH WEIZENBAUM.
Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139.

'What is Art History?'

Sir,—Sir John Pope-Hennessy's review of my book *What is Art History?* (August 6) puzzles me. I mention Masaccio's Pisa altarpiece, in fact, though I do not illustrate it; and my supposed failure to understand that "art-history is really the study of the human creative process, of how works of art come into being" ought to be qualified by the closely matching statement on this subject with which I close the book. For a whole paragraph, by exploiting a possible confusion between stories about the activity of art-historians and the activity itself, he provides a running caricature of what I actually do, even making me appear to suggest that the possibility of discovering a Tiepolo ceiling is somehow magically multiplied in Mayfair. But it is the rest of what he says that more concerns me.

To explain the mystique of art history, and the need to cut through it, I might use elements in Sir John's own writings. The "governing concept of similitude" in style analysis, which he feels needs further explanation, could have its limitations as well as virtues illustrated by an early attribution of his to Domenico Veneziano, which was argued in those terms and has not won acceptance. Or I might take up what he has contributed on specific subjects which come up in my book: the suggested location of Donatello's "Ascension" relief, the authorship propounded by him for the Kingston "Lacemaker" judgement of Solomon," the facts he assembled for the later history of the Raphael cartoons, his idea of the thoughts expressed on the face of Lotto's "Odoni".

While no one would suppose lack of commitment or of observation to be at stake, some art-historians would call those mistakes, or aberrations, of a worse order than those of which I am found guilty by him. But if the mystique is to be cut through, I had hoped in writing the book that it might be done in a friendly and open way, and hence my puzzlement.

The picture which Sir John offers of my finding him muttering at the back in my lectures has a peculiar charm—well as I remember how I felt when I first faced his approach and style of delivery as a lecturer. It would be valuable to bring out into the open for further discussion the differing role of connoisseurship as between university scholars and museum men; the audience for art-history in America as compared to England, especially now Sir John is moving to this country; and what can be expected of the beginning student in the field. But the obvious gap between Sir John's perspectives here and mine would have to be narrowed from his side rather than mine. That is what my book says, in effect.

MARK ROSKILL.
Department of Art, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts 01002.

Sean O'Casey

Sir,—I am sorry to see Vivian Mercier, the distinguished Anglo-Irish scholar, in his review of Bernard Benstock's *Paycocks and Others* (August 13), taking the narrow provincial view of O'Casey's achievement, maintaining that O'Casey lost his way as a dramatist "in mid-career", after the rejection by the Abbey Theatre directorate in 1928 of *The Silver Tassie*.

Leaving aside the question whether in critical terms *The Silver Tassie* is O'Casey's "fourth major work", or whether it is a better play than either *Juno and the Paycock* or *The Plough and The Stars*, it is inconceivable that a scholar of Dr Mercier's standing should use the pretext of his review as a yardstick with which to cudgel O'Casey's firmly established reputation as a major dramatist. He owes him generosity to assert (and, indeed, hopes) that out of the functions which the book's purpose might serve could be to "spare generations of students the necessity of actually reading some of the more inept among the later plays".

As we are not told which these are, if indeed they exist at all, such a wildly flung claim in the face of an internationally revered dramatist can scarcely be substantiated. Perhaps your reviewer is also unaware of a growing body of critical opinion that has expanded rapidly (and not merely in English-speaking countries alone) in the twelve years since O'Casey's death, culminating in, for instance, the yearly journal of specific studies, entitled *The Sean O'Casey Review* (edited by Robert G. Lowery of Hofstra University, New York), together with several doctoral studies in both the United States and the continent, a bibliographical bibliography of the playwright's writings, edited by Ronald Ayling and Michael J. Durkan. Would such scholarship have been lavished on a playwright who had supposedly lost his sense of direction halfway through his career?

Dr Mercier wrote a vitriolic attack in the pages of *Commonweal* in 1956, entitled "Decline of a Playwright: The Riddle of Sean O'Casey". Even after twenty years, apparently, he cannot bring himself to accept O'Casey's transition and development as a dramatist and his consequent shift in technique—from his early plays which mirror the heart and soul of Dublin in its trauma of the 1920s to his later styled, pastoral types of play, kaleidoscopic in texture, that are passed, just as are the works of Strindberg and O'Neill, on fantasy of an unusual kind. "Nothing is more delightful than fantasy in movement" wrote Strindberg in 1894, who, in turn, was echoed by Yeats, writing in 1905, "I am certain that everywhere literature will return once more to its old extravagant fantastical expression. . . . Everything in Ireland urges us to this return."

How ironic, therefore, when after O'Casey had hurled an enormous chunk of epic fantasy in the form of *The Silver Tassie* at Yeats and his fellow directors they ducked the issue (as Vivian Mercier now does, too) by avoiding the necessity of having to come to terms with plays that are fancy-bred and fancy-inspired.

JOHN O'RIORDAN.
79 The Mall, Southgate, London N14 6LL.

'The Untilled Field'

Sir,—I am moved to confess I can find only limited value in Derek Mahon's review in the *TLS* (August 6) of a recent reprint of George Moore's *The Untilled Field*. He criticizes various stories in this collection (which he acknowledges "has gone through six previous editions, the last in 1937") as if that reprint represents Moore's work of 1903, yet he ends his remarks with the information, seemingly garnered from a publisher's note appearing first in the 1931 edition, that "Fugitives" "is a not entirely successful reworking of two earlier stories (that that one here), 'In the Clay' and 'The Way Back'". As Edwin Gilcher has made quite clear in his painstaking bibliography of Moore, no one should be that casual about the publishing history of any of Moore's titles. Over the years Moore published *The Untilled Field* in ten "editions" (some but "issues", strictly speaking) which comprise six separate English-language versions, several of them significantly different, as Royal Gettmann demonstrated thirty-two years ago in his *PMLA* article "George Moore's Revisions of 'The Lake', 'The Wild Goose', and *Esther Waters*". Obviously, the final version of *The Untilled Field* cannot be accepted as the stories represent Moore's 1903 and artistry. It seems axiomatic that a reviewer must convey a clearer awareness of textual history than Mr Mahon does for his remarks about a reprint (or reissue) of Moore's work to be valid.

Incidentally, for the Gaelic version *An T-ór-Gart*, an earlier collection of six of the stories of *The Untilled Field*, the translator was Padraic O'Sullivan, not Tindigh O'Donaghue, as Mr Mahon implies through context.

JAY JERNIGAN.
2447 Roanoke Drive, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197.

Velikovsky

Sir,—In listing his objections to Velikovsky's "tissue of astronomical improbability" (Letters, August 6), Ian Christie appears to believe that the condensation theory of planetary formation precludes any changes in planetary orbits since the formation of the system. I would suggest that he is mistaken in this. Even after three decades of space research with its proliferation of new data, A. G. W. Cameron can still write (*Scientific American*, September 1975): "We still have no generally accepted theory to explain how the primitive solar nebula formed, how and when the sun began to shine and how and when planets coalesced out of swirling dust." Cameron goes on to propose his own model, but admits: "Many of its details remain highly speculative." Elsewhere in the same journal can be found five alternative solar systems which might result from a condensation hypothesis, with the qualification that "the assumptions behind such calculations are probably too simple".

Various attempts to analyse the hypothesis have produced widely varying results. In 1960 W. H. MacCrea—then president of the Royal Astronomical Society—calculated that no planet could have formed inside the orbit of Jupiter. In 1965 T. Gold contended that the planet Mercury could not have been in its present orbit for more than 400,000 years, as it is still rotating with respect to the sun. J. G. Hills's 1969 paper indicated that Jupiter and Saturn have originally the outermost planets to form, and that Uranus, Neptune and Pluto were displaced into their present orbits by planetary encounters. Mr Christie's "uniformitarian" scenario has problems, moreover, in explaining the retrograde rotation of Venus.

As regards "presenting the calculations", I agree there is a need for this. The work of R. W. Bass on orbital stability has already been pointed out (Letters, July 9) and I am pleased to inform your readers that the *Society for Interdisciplinary Studies* Review will shortly be publishing a series of three articles which will quantitatively examine the various possibilities for an origin of Venus compatible with Velikovsky's theory.

There have been those in every age who believe that virtually all the events in the cosmos have been revealed and that only a few details remain to be filled in; they have inevitably been proved wrong.

R. M. LOWERY.
Society for Interdisciplinary Studies Review, 11 Adcott Road, Acklam, Middlesbrough, Cleveland.

Amcng this week's contributors

WALTER ALLEN's books include *Tradition and Dream*, 1964, and *Transatlantic Crossing*, 1971.

PETER CLARKE is a Lecturer in History at University College London.

JOHN FOSTER is a Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford.

ROGER FULFORD's most recent book is *The Trial of Queen Caroline*, 1967.

PETER GATHERCOLE is the Curator of the University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge.

CHRISTOPHER GREEN is a Lecturer at the Courtauld Institute, London.

SIR WILLIAM HALEY was Editor of *The Times* from 1952 to 1966.

J. G. KORNGOLD is the author of *The Habsburgs and Europe, 1516-1660*, 1971.

JOHN D. LESS's books include *The Committee System of the United States Congress*, 1967, and *The Political System of the United States*, 1969.

STEVEN MARCUS is the author of *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 1974.

A. G. MOLLAND is a Lecturer in History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Aberdeen.

TERENCE MORRIS is Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics.

ANTHONY QUINTON is the author of *The Nature of Things*, 1973.

D. D. RAPHAEL's most recent book is *Problems of Political Philosophy*, 1970.

DAVID ROGERS is Senior Assistant Librarian at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

M. J. S. RUDWICK is a Professor in the Unit for History and Social Aspects of Science at Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam.

PAUL SLACK is the author (with P. A. Clark) of *Crisis and Order in English Towns, 1500-1700*, 1972.

A. M. SNODGRASS's most recent book is *The Dark Age of Greece*, 1971.

ANNE STEVENSON's collection of poems *Travelling Behind Glass* was published in 1974.

DAVID WALL is the author of *The Third World Challenge*, 1968.

J. WREFORD WATSON is Professor of Geography at the University of Edinburgh.

J. J. WILKES's *Dalmatia* was published in 1969.

GEORGE WOODCOCK's most recent books include *Who Killed the British Empire?*, 1974, and *Notes on Visitations*, 1975.

The *stamina* of seriousness

By William Haley

JOHN W. MARRS Jnr (Editor):
The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb
Volume I 1796-1801, Volume II 1821-1809
[illegible] pp; and 304pp. Cornell University Press. £17.50 each volume.

GEORGE DANDEL:
The World of Elia
Charles Lamb's Essayistic Romanticism
[illegible] pp. Kennikat Press. £10.

Can the New World restore a reputation to the Old? Here is a double attempt. Lamb as a letter-writer is reinforced and re-exhibited; as an essayist examined in a new light. Why the drive and energy of America should apply itself to one of the most lackadaisical of English writers is an interesting problem in national psychologies.

Of the two efforts *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb* is the more impressive. If there are nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal lays, we cannot jib at a fifteenth edition of Lamb's letters, especially as every single one of the previous fourteen has been far from right. Talfourd, Carew Hazlitt, Sala, Purnell, Percy Fitzgerald, Ainger, Macdonald, Lucas are among those who have set themselves the task—some of them more than once—during the past 119 years. Each had sought to improve on his forerunners, both in abundance and accuracy. E. V. Lucas's claim to completeness, so far as that was possible at the time he finished his work (1935), was generally accepted. Increasingly, however, his scholarship has been challenged. Now comes Edwin W. Marrs, with the aid of two foundations, of bodies of Colgate and Pittsburgh universities, and a host of other helpers, to put things right.

Mr Marrs appears to have gone a long way towards doing so. (The slight qualification is necessary in view of his mention of "the few extant manuscript letters that are unavailable". Also some letters Lamb is known to have written have vanished.) He tells us:

> Over 7 per cent of the more than 1,150 letters in the present edition have not previously been published. Over 11 per cent are not in the preceding edition. About 80 per cent of the letters in the present edition are transcriptions of original manuscripts, copies, or facsimiles. . . .

His long introduction contains not only a detailed recital of all his predecessors' efforts but also a factual narrative of the lives of Charles Lamb and his sister, in which Marry's constant journeylings into and out of mental homes are made all the more poignant by being told without emotion.

These first two volumes—out of a set of six — contain 231 letters, and take Lamb to the age of 34. The disaster of *Mr H* was well behind him. He had established himself as a critic of the Elizabethan dramatists. A further collection of pieces before Elia appeared, but part of the interest in the later letters in these volumes is to find in them the germs of some of the essays. Wordsworth replaces Coleridge as a major correspondent. Hazlitt is added to Lamb's slowly widening circle. Mary Lamb's ability as an excellent letter-writer in her own right. Lamb acknowledges, "She writes a pretty good style". What strikes the reader is her good sense. She could cope with Coleridge. She gave sensible advice to Sarah Stoddart when Sarah became engaged to Hazlitt. She was frank and watchful about her brother. Lamb said truly:

> She is older, & wiser, & better than me, and all my wretched imperfections I cover to myself, by resolutely thinking on her goodness.

The enormity of Mary Lamb's tragedy has so blotted out all other aspects of her that it is good to see her as a whole woman.

Mr Marrs has worked heroically. His notes are copious. Very few are the obscure people he has been unable to identify. Part of the fascination of these volumes is the host of minor characters, from George Dyer to William Knight, we get to know more fully. Mr Marrs has prudently printed letters to Lamb when they are required to explain Lamb's own. Lamb, like Robert Burton, was a compulsive quoter, often without indication, so that the notes can at times make the reader feel he is on the road to another Xanadu.

At the same time we wonder whether, even with all such aids, the reader who needs to be told who wrote *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and *Roderick Random*, and that "To be or not to be" comes from *Hamlet* is going to stay the time by more than two-thirds of this edition of Lamb's letters. Presumably it is not for him. The price would seem to rule that out.

It has been asserted time and again that Lamb is among the greatest of English letter-writers. How great are the English as letter writers? Walpole, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Keats can stand in any international company. The more endearing favourites, Gray, Cowper, Fitz-Gerald, and their fellows, create the feeling that as a nation we make much out of little. Lamb, it can be argued, is an exception. His life was far from placid. Birrell said that life was Lamb's real vocation, literature being his hobby. "Lamb's letters", Birrell averred, "are not only the best text of his life, but the best comment upon it." That Lamb's tragic and self-sacrificing life would preserve for him a place in any history of English literature is certain.

The image of the private Elia as a drunken, stuttering, insubstantial humorist with a weakness for puns is a travesty, if it is taken to be the whole man. In his early years there was a strain of religiousness in him. And when he wrote to Wilson "I have *stamina* of seriousness within me" he was saying no more than truth, whatever face he presented to the public. It showed mainly in his letters. His love for Coleridge, in spite of occasional slight rifts, was lifelong. His circle was not composed solely of cronies. Hazlitt, who was no idolater, wrote during Lamb's life that it was his virtues as well as his foibles that made him endearing. In hearing of his death Landor wrote:

> Cordial old man! what youth was in thy years,
> What wisdom in thy levity, what soul.
> In every utterance of that purest breast!
> Of all that ever wore man's form, tis thee
> I first would spring to at the gate of Heaven.

These are undying tributes to Lamb as a man. How is he surviving as a writer? Hitherto only a small part of his work has commanded critical consideration. He was not even a minor poet of substance. The generous and sentimental Q printed "The Old Familiar Faces", "Hester", and "On an infant dying as soon as born" in *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. The more severe Nichol Smith included no poem of Lamb's — not even the first of Q's trio, written in 1798—in *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*. Nor does he appear in John Hayward's nineteenth-century volume. How many people can recite a single poem by Lamb today?

It may be said that this is pushing at an open door. Lamb has never owed his place to his poetry. It is as an essayist that whatever attraction to him and liking for him there is today survives. It is a case of Elia or nothing for most of those who now think about him at all. And even then they are thinking of him than of his writings. From the boyhood recollections in "Christ's Hospital Five-and-Thirty Years Ago" to "The Superannuated Man", written on his retirement from India House, his appeal is to an odd kind of nostalgia, not for anything we ourselves can ever have known, but for a gentleness and pace of life that were gone long before our time, and we fear can never return even for our children's grandchildren. It is true there are left a handful of other essays that can still charm. They are not sufficient to carry his fame through many more centuries. He was not an original thinker. His explorations of other areas of thought were few, and unimaginable.

To Professor Randel of the University of California, San Diego, such views are imperceptive. In "the first book that has been devoted to using modern critical techniques to consider Lamb's major essay-series as a whole" he sets out to show Lamb, in Elia, to be probably the subtlest, liveliest, wisest, and most imaginative twentieth or nineteenth-century English writer to suffer nearly complete critical neglect for the past two generations". He seeks out "the meeting-places between the artistic structure of the Elia essays and their world-view". Even the "Dissertation on Roast Pig" has heights and depths not previously suspected. It is "unique among Lamb's work in the complexity of its treatment of progress and in its sustained criticism of both the fall and progress as adequate models of history". A reading of *The World of Elia* reminds us of the predicament of the hero of *Hamlet*. Were we to be cured of our illusions, all the charm and savour (of Lamb) would be gone.

Outside the drama Lamb was not a great critic. His letters show that by the time he was twenty-three his knowledge of literature was wide, probably wider than he realized. His assertion to Coleridge in 1798 that "I have read little, I have a very weak memory & retain little of what I read" was manifestly untrue. The amount of other men's language in his letters shows that. His confession that he was "unused to compositions in which any kind of thinking is required" was true. He was never, not even when writing about the Elizabethan playwrights, a systematic critic. But while away from them, he could expect Southey one day to rival Milton", and later could not see "any great merit in the little dialogue called 'Blenheim'"; his essay "On the Tragedies of Shakespeare", his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets, Who Lived About the Time of Shakespeare*, and all his scattered notes and observations in these fields are still worth attention. Not until Swinburne did anyone know the Elizabethan dramatists so well, and Swinburne was rhapsodical rather than critical.

Lamb was frank when he told Manning, "I set to, with an uncontrollable propulsion to write, with a lamentable inability of what to write". There is a revealing picture of him in one of Mary's letters "writing and burning a dozen sheets of paper (which perhaps you do not know is her usual habit)". Thus it was that in his letters and in his essays he had so often to turn to himself for a subject. Unfortunately, the pitifulness of his life and the piebald nature of his character were not enough to provide for us inexhaustible interest. He contributed affection not reflection. He was not a Rousseau, a Johnson, a Montaigne, a Hazlitt, or even a Henry James or D. H. Lawrence—continuously vital artists, each with his own enigma. Lamb could write like an angel, over not much more than the area on which an angel is supposed to dance. That is small foundation for great fame. Immortals are few. Mr Marrs is erecting an imposing monument. Can it escape becoming a mausoleum?

Feminist findings

By Walter Allen

JONNI CALDER:
Women and Marriage in Victorian Fiction
223pp. Thames and Hudson. £5 (paperback, £2.50).

Women and Marriage in Victorian Fiction is the first book to be published in a new series of literary studies, "The World of Literature", under the general editorship of David Daiches. Its aim, according to the note on the jacket, is to

> investigate the social and psychological bases of dramatic and literary works and give prominence to the cultural system of which they are the expression. With full recognition of the contribution made by the purely literary approach of the so-called New Critics, the authors' aim is to bring history and biography back into literary studies in a richer way and at a higher level.

There is surely some confusion, indeed contradiction, here and it is reflected in Jenni Calder's book.

She is in fact betrayed by her title, which by this year of grace must be one to deaden the spirit. At times she seems to be writing social history or, at least, deducing social history from fiction; and she uses Victorian polemicists to throw light on the findings of Victorian novelists, and vice versa. At the same time, she shows herself an admirable reader of fiction, of Thackeray's especially, and she can ask uncomfortably awkward questions of novelists of great reputation, of George Eliot, for instance:

> When Daniel Deronda rediscovers his mother, he finds a woman he cannot love, and who cannot love him. Deronda's mother had rejected him as a young child because he was in the way of her career. "Had I not a rightful claim to be something more than a mere daughter and mother?" she appeals. The question is not answered. . . . But the question continually present throughout George Eliot's fiction, and both negative and affirmative answers are suggested. Those admirable women, who make a success of marriage and motherhood are the least of her creations. Does Mary Garth command our lasting interest? It is the rebels, Maggie, Dorothea and Gwendolen, however inadequate their rebellion, who engage our concern. These are the women who want "something more", and the fact that their desire does not allow them success does not undermine the point of their efforts.

Sadly, and it is the radical criticism of George Eliot, she does not commit herself fully to the energies and aspirations she lets loose in these women. Does she not cheat them and cheat us, ultimately, in allowing them so little?

But is the criticism "radical"? Isn't it, in fact, rather naive, for surely the fact that George Eliot allows her great heroines "so little" is one reason why we find her rending of society so impressive, why we trust her so implicitly? Maggie and Dorothea are in a sense surrogates for George Eliot herself, but she did not make them novelists. She did not make them prophets. Had she done so, they might have commanded all the success that she herself achieved both in literature and in life. In that case though, she would have had to create partners for them comparable in understanding, sympathy and self-abnegation to G. H. Lewes himself. As it was, she cast them and their aspirations in a more common mould, in which, at the best, they might do no more than make a small work for Middlemarch. Even so, as George Eliot points out, opportunity is everything:

> Many Thereses have been born who have found for themselves no epic life wherein there was a constant unfolding of far-resonant action; perhaps only a life of mistakes, the offspring of a character with no proportion adapted to the proportions of the times; of a character urged by a certain spiritual grandeur ill-matched with the meanness of opportunity.

Which prompts the reflection that to look at novels in terms of the women and marriages described in them, to use novels as source-materials for social history, is inevitably to distort and diminish them as novels. And this is because major novels, novels such as Mrs Calder is concerned with, are not conceived and written to illustrate abstract theories of, in this instance, marriage and the nature and position of women, but to express the novelist's deepest intuitions into the human condition.

This is to say that the conditions of women, which during the past two centuries has become for women increasingly a problem, is merely one problem, no matter how intense, among many. Mrs Calder writes very well indeed on Mrs Gaskell, whom she considers "one of the few major Victorian writers who shows us marriage from a woman's point of view as something other than an escape, a reinforcement of social status, or a utilitarian contract". And perhaps she writes so well on Mrs Gaskell because of the relative ordinariness of the women the author writes about. They do not aspire to the condition of St Teresa.

By comparison, Dickens defeats Mrs Calder, possibly "because he was trying to cope with all these versions of marriage and more but, although so much more ambitious in scope and intentions, there were certain things he was not able to handle: a sense of the intimate life of ordinary people which he could not communicate, perhaps had little interest in . . . a lack that is much in evidence in the way he wrote about marriages and families".

On the late Victorians Hardy and Gissing Mrs Calder is quite surprisingly inadequate. She does not mention *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and she has nothing to say on Sue Bridehead, who was surely the archetype of the New Woman, to whom Mrs Calder devotes a chapter. Nor does she mention Gissing, he is [illegible] of particular interest because. In successive novels he puts both the man's and the woman's attitudes towards marriage. In *New Grub Street* Reardon is portrayed, not ironically, as something like a male chauvinist or at least as consumed by male egotism; while in *The Odd Women*, Gissing is concerned with the situation of those women who refused what in another context he called the "atavistic badge" in that, willingly or unwillingly, they did not marry. Here, his attitude is aggressively feminist. Mrs Calder finds the New Woman heroine of the novel, Rhoda Nunn, "very unpleasant . . . a prig and a puritan", it would be more accurate to call her a revolutionary; and she is one of Gissing's most memorable egotists, one, who convinces by her elevation of single-mindedness to principle. She is plainly the sibling of the remarkable Godwin Peake of *Born in Exile*. I think that Mrs Calder underrates the complexity and subtlety of *The Odd Women*.

A purely pictorial Picasso

By Christopher Green

TIMOTHY HILTON :
Picasso
287pp and 207 illustrations, 30 in colour. Thames and Hudson. £4.50.

Timothy Hilton's *Picasso* is a provoking book ; it takes sides with stylish vigour. Under the weight of the Picasso literature it effervesces refreshingly. Mr Hilton's writing is full of fanfares and insults. He cannot mention Picasso and Matisse together without calling them "the two greatest artists of the first half of the twentieth century", almost daring us to deny it; and he cannot dismiss Constructivism without scornfully adding ("that decorative adjunct of the machine age"). It is quarrelsome writing, and Mr Hilton has a taste for the resounding statement. In combat he often intersers, as when he maintains convincingly that "Les demoiselles d'Avignon" was not merely "abandoned" (the usual view), but was finished and restarted, only to be left when Picasso realized it was spoilt; or when he maintains that "Guernica" failed. His contentiousness can lead to overstatement, but generally it gives the book pace and urgency.

A fighting style is not always destructive, and here it is backed by a positive critical stance, for Mr Hilton is on the side of Clement Greenberg. He is one of those late twentieth-century writers whose concern with painting as painting, though no longer tied to a Renaissance notion of composition, looks back to the early twentieth-century aestheticism of Roger Fry. Considering the claustrophobic compositions of figure-paintings like the 1927 "Seated Woman", he rejects "psychological, autobiographical or social-historical speculations" to concentrate on the fact that "the paintings are what they were made to be, and their enclosed atmosphere, their imprisoned nature, is actual rather than illustrative, and belongs to the work, not to the 'subject' of the work". He can consider sex, politics and humour only as peripheral to the central questions raised by art "on the highest levels", and, like Fry, he separates altogether art and illustrations, going further to call one good and the other bad. For him, as for Greenberg, the modern tradition is anti-illustrational, and twentieth-century art cannot be good if it is out of touch with this tradition. He gives us, belligerently, a view of Picasso from a strict formalist position — a contemporary critical view therefore, since formalism has deeply affected both art and art writing in the past fifteen years.

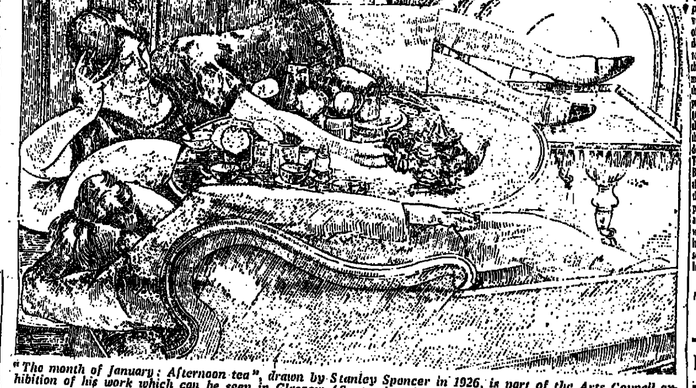
"Picasso", writes Mr Hilton, "presents a whole arena of disagreement", and, naturally, I disagree with Mr Hilton. I cannot accept formalism as objectively valid, and see it rather as an orthodoxy in avant-garde art and criticism susceptible to historical change. It is therefore his formalist stance (which makes his book so representative of today) that precipitates my most important disagreements.

Formalist critics — especially Greenberg—have written well about Cubist painting, and Mr Hilton has the same capacity to use his eyes inquiringly and sensitively. But I cannot accept his interpretation of Cubism as a whole. His conviction that the "highest" qualities possessed by a painting are purely pictorial leads him first to play down the exploration of paradoxical relationships between painting and subject central to Picasso's Cubism, and second to reject any discussion of shifting-viewpoint analysis as a process by which the subject is "conceptualized". The subject in Cubist painting is of little significance for him, and so he overstresses the pictorial qualities of, for instance, the "Portrait of Vollard" and the Cadaquès nudes. He is right in that the latter Picasso opened up form and that "the most satisfactory . . . were paintings of columnar nudes where lateral expansion was not a problem", but he ignores the real problem for Picasso, which was how to make a painting out of flattened non-imitative components which yet gave off an unmistakeable sense of a subject, stimulating that never quite satisfied interest, vacillating between one kind of visual experience and another, that he wanted. It was surely the need to intensify the sense of a subject that led the painter in the "Half-Length Female Nude" (Walter Arensberg collection), probably of late 1910, to paint over the elaborate scaffold originally developed in the setting so as to isolate the central figurative structure, and that led to the introduction of "clues" after the summer of 1910. The synthetic Cubism of 1912-14, with its sharpened sense of paradox, cannot interest Mr Hilton as much as earlier Cubism, and it is a further demonstration of his formalist bias that, after spending eighteen pages on the years 1910-12, the next two years are covered in a breathless four pages. The lack of balance here almost induces vertigo.

Yet, more important than Mr Hilton's one-sided view of Cubism, is his judgment on the whole of Picasso's achievement between 1925 and 1939, for here he advances a brand-new argument which will be immensely attractive and perhaps influential. For him, the Picasso of these years was a "conservative" painter, inventive admittedly, but engaged not in innovation but in bringing to an end "the great tradition of European figure-painting". Mr Hilton sees Picasso's attack on figurative conventions and his enclosed, Cubist spaces by contrast with what for him was the genuinely innovative radicalism of Miró's decentralized compositions and wide open spaces experienced as fields. Miró's "magnetic fields" of the late 1920s (as Margit Rowell called them) are directly relevant to what has happened since Cubism, especially in American painting, therefore he is "radical"; Picasso's enclosed spaces and figurative distortions are not relevant, therefore he is "conservative". For Mr Hilton, Picasso was "deeply unwilling . . . to effect a personal transition from being a painter of figures to being a painter of shapes (which does not necessarily mean an abstract painter)", and for this reason he finds the spectacle of Picasso between 1925 and 1939 "a bitterly depressing experience". Mr Greenberg's response to the 1925 "Three Dancers" had prepared us for such a view, but here it is for the first time comprehensively and persuasively presented—art-history and current art criticism almost coalesce.

I believe, however, that we have here not a new historical truth generated by criticism, but distortion. In Paris between 1925 and 1939 the potential of Cubist space and figure painting rejuvenated Cubism and then Surrealism must have seemed unlimited, even after German and Russian geometric abstraction had made their mark. Picasso's art at this time can only appear "conservative" if considered as if the product of a later time. As a critic Mr Hilton would be right to say that Picasso's painting from "The Three Dancers" to "Guernica" has little relevance to art after Abstract Expressionism, but it is hopelessly entangling the past with the present to use the term "conservative", implying as it does an avant-garde situation and an awareness of possible choices that did not exist. Moreover, it demonstrates a lack of a larger sense of history to suggest that Picasso's art between the wars marked the "end" of the European figure-painting tradition, for both art and criticism continue to change, and what appears an end now may not appear in a decade. It is not long since post-Abstract Expressionist painting changed the image of late Monet from what had seemed the end of the European landscape tradition into something "radical" and prophetic.

There are many more points on which I disagree with Mr Hilton, but then debate is the natural complement to his book. New issues and others that seemed written to death have been given the vigour to create new interest.



"The month of January: Afternoon tea", drawn by Stanley Spencer in 1926, in part of the Arts Council exhibition of his work which can be seen in Glasgow (September 4-October 10), Leeds (October 23-November 21) and Cambridge (December 4-January 10)

A taste for the ethnic

By Peter Gathercole

STEVEN PHELPS :
Art and Artefacts of the Pacific, Africa and the Americas
The James Hooper Collection
487pp. Hutchinson/Christie's. £20.

James Hooper (1897-1971) was one of several private collectors of ethnographical objects who, in the first half of this century, were able to indulge their passion to the full without leaving this country. At London sale-rooms, or from each other, they could buy fine objects obtained over the past two centuries from much of the non-European world. Unlike such collectors as Buller, Sessler, and Wellcome, however, Hooper was not a man of means. He was a bank clerk who had to earn his living. On the other hand, he was not a dealer like Oldman, so his collecting was confined by opportunity as much as purse. Despite these drawbacks he built up a fine collection of about 2,000 items from Oceania, America and Africa, of which this book is a fitting memorial.

Ethnographic collections acquired by men who did not go into the field were never representative, in any comprehensive sense, of the societies from which they came. They made up a pastiche, put together at home from what became available from thousands of objects acquired by colonial traders, travellers, settlers, missionaries and administrators. It is one of the paradoxes of this episode in imperial history that the heyday of field collecting preceded the growth of anthropology as an academic discipline, when objects were often acquired with bland disregard of ethnographic evidence. Not surprisingly, twentieth-century private collectors obtained material which had been well sieved by European taste before the new owners bore their trophies home from a metropolitan sale-room or a junkshop in a quiet country town. Today these objects are either dispersed among the world's museums, or lost, or, in the case of items thought to be particularly beautiful according to Western taste, they are in private art collections. Rarely have they been returned to their countries of origin, which need them most.

Hooper had a good eye and obtained both rare pieces and commoner ones reflecting more mundane aspects of life. When objects were accompanied by information he kept both; it is a pity that so much information had been lost before he could record it. Inevitably this collection evolved as an uneven thing, a product not of scholarship but of knowledgeable enthusiasm, enhanced in the case of Oceania, its largest section, by a growing perception of island variations. At Hooper's death, it was essential that his collection should be fully published, which had happened only rarely in the case of other private collections before they were dispersed.

Steven Phelps has produced a most valuable record, the core of which is the catalogue and its 258 plates, illustrating 90 per cent of the collection. The author, a graduate student in his twenties, is Hooper's grandson and knows the objects well. His annotations are generally sound, and where possible he amplifies Hooper's identifications. Researchers who have hunted for information on nineteenth-century sailors or travellers whose names haunt museum registers may well find leans in them here. In this respect Phelps's work marks a turning-point in ethnohistorical inquiry into private collections, because he approaches the objects as anthropological evidence, not art. It is unfortunate that many of the photographs lack contrast. This does limited justice to the quality of the specimens and fits ill with the high standard of production of the book, which was generously sponsored by Christie's.

Mr Phelps has done more than produce an illustrated catalogue. He has included a short biography of Hooper, which is helpful but rather thin on the motives for, and chronology of, his collecting. The author has also tackled the formidable task of setting each section, continent by continent, in its academic context. To summarize current (and often conflicting) views on the ethnography of much of the non-European world is very difficult, and in this respect Mr Phelps has been only partially successful. He has handled the Oceanic material very well, despite some quirks of emphasis. But the sections on the Americas and Africa reflect both the limitations of Hooper's collection and Mr Phelps's difficulties in reducing the histories of complex indigenous societies to balanced generalizations. The numerous accompanying maps are useful, although the one of New Zealand has a few strange slips: here the Waikato River does not reach the sea and the archaeological site of Kauri Point is placed north of Auckland instead of near Tauranga. The bibliographies and index are excellently detailed. Mr Phelps has done his work well; whenever happens to the Hooper collection this book is its permanent record.

The quest for authority

H. G. Koenigsberger

THEODORE K. RABB :
The Struggle for Stability in Early Modern Europe
Oxford University Press. 188pp. (paperback, £1.50).

The seventeenth century has never had a generally accepted name tag, such as the age of the Reformation or the Enlightenment. This is not merely fortuitous. It is not easy to see how the rise of parliament and the rise of absolutism under a single historiographical roof. The years of the Thirty Years War and the age of Louis XIV are rather obviously characterized more by their differences than by their similarities, while the age of the Stuarts is too vague a term to be useful and the scientific revolution is too narrow. Yet historians, under the influence of the social sciences, are more anxious than ever to find a—not perhaps so much a name, as a model, for the history of the seventeenth century. This is what Theodore Rabb has quite avowedly set out to do.

He starts with a survey of models that have been proposed in the past twenty years and the controversies they have aroused. Most of these have hinged on economic developments, or they have tended to read the English experience into the rest of Europe, or both, and many of them have concentrated on the middle of the century. Not surprisingly, none of them has found general acceptance. Most, but not all, historians are now agreed that there was a crisis in the middle decades of the seventeenth century. There were the civil wars in the British Isles and the overthrow of the English monarchy. In France the civil wars of the Fronde paralysed the country between 1648 and 1653. The Spanish monarchy was faced with successful rebellions in Catalonia and Portugal and with serious revolts in Naples and Sicily. In the United Provinces of the Netherlands the house of Orange and the patrician class of Holland manoeuvred to the very brink of civil war and the patricians managed to put their quasi-monarchy into cold storage. In Sweden, political struggles stopped just short of such results and in Denmark it was the king who overthrew the parliamentary regime of the nobility. Even in eastern Europe there was a major social and political upheaval in the Cossack wars against Poland, 1648-51, but only the most optimistic model builders have attempted to integrate these events with those occurring in the very different social and political structures of western Europe.

Professor Rabb is not among these ; but he accepts the reality of the crisis in western Europe. Moreover, he sees it not from an English but from a general European point of view and he also widens it to include cultural aspects of European life. Even leaving out the Cossacks, this is the most ambitious attempt yet made to see the seventeenth century as a whole. It is a pity that Professor Rabb has not allowed himself more space for his essay; but his thesis is quite clear, he writes well and fluently, and his prose is happily clear of fashionable sociological jargon.

Since the word crisis is, in any case, a metaphor, Professor Rabb decides to use it in its medical sense, as the climax of a disease before its resolution. The nature of the resolution was the reaffirmation of authority, harmony and balance of the classical age of Louis XIV and the first half of the eighteenth century. The disputed questions of the previous age were resolved and it was the fact of resolution, rather than its nature, which was the important point. In other words, the aristocratic English society with its mixed constitution of king and parliament was as settled, or seemed to contemporaries as settled, as the absolutism of Louis XIV.

Since authority, harmony and balance were the outcome of the resolution of the crisis of the mid-seventeenth century, Professor Rabb concludes that it was the absence of these qualities which provides the clue to the nature of the crisis. It was, he argues, a crisis of authority; and by a fine imaginative leap he extends this perception to the further theory that the whole previous age was characterized by a search for legitimate and acceptable authority. In this way he interprets the whole of European history, from "the fifty years around 1500" to the first two thirds of the seventeenth century. Thus in political ideas Machiavelli overthrew all accepted norms; in religion Savonarola, Luther and the other reformers attacked the traditional teaching of the church and the authority of the papacy while Montaigne and the sceptics went further and questioned all religious certainty. The Copernican revolution, "the new philosophy", in John Donne's famous (but here misinterpreted) phrase, "calls all in doubt".

Literature and art followed a similar pattern. Faust and Don Quixote are in quest of the unattainable; the "tragic heroes of Shakespeare and the comic heroes of Molière painfully learn to keep their ambitions and hopes in bounds" and Milton's Satan is "banished to hell for overreaching himself". The harmony of classical Renaissance art is followed by the deliberate distortions of mannerism, reflecting "the atmosphere of disquiet that had been engendered by the assault on traditional verities". And if anyone should imagine that the baroque might have presented a new harmony, he is soon disabused, for it "epitomized the belief that grandeur and immensity could subdue uncertainty".

Similarly, in the social and political sphere, this was an age of peasant risings and urban riots, of revolts against established authority and of wars which became more and more ferocious and destructive. It was those latter developments which culminated in the political and social crisis of 1640-60.

But the last third of the seventeenth century saw authority vindicated in the politics of absolute monarchy or the Whig supremacy, in the certainties of the Newtonian world system and in the changed sensibilities of artists and writers.

For the titanic struggles of the generations from Shakespeare to Milton gave way almost suddenly to genteelness and calm. The confidence that the Baroque exuded but never quite captured was replaced by the much more convincing assurance of the last decades of the century, when artists felt less driven to trumpet their powers, when they ceased protesting too much. . . . Never room-sized canvases and heroic poetry became decreasingly necessary as the impulse to overwhelm doubt dwindled away.

This is an attractive model, and it does what a historical model is meant to do: not to allow us to predict or retrodict, which it certainly does not do, but to provide insight into and explanations of historical events, perhaps even to lay bare their causes, or some of them. The quest for authority is a valid metaphor and I hope historians will discuss and perhaps use it. But Professor Rabb claims too much for it. In the first place he has left out a good deal which most other historians of the seventeenth-century crises have based their models, in one form or another, on the economic developments of the period. Professor Rabb has eventually left them out altogether. And if art and literature reflect the spirit of the age, why not also music, or some forms of literature such as the *commedia dell' arte*, an unheroic but subtle art form that maintained its immense popularity from the late sixteenth right through to the eighteenth century and beyond?

In the second place, it is difficult to accept Professor Rabb's characterizations in quite the categorical form he puts them forward. "Grandeur and immensity subduing uncertainty" is not a characterization that would seem to fit Caravaggio or Poussin or Claude Lorrain or . . . but one could multiply examples endlessly. Nor is uncertainty at all the characteristic of the pro-Newtonian scientists. Compared with Leonardo da Vinci, for instance, they were all remarkably optimistic about their own and their generation's ability to understand the coherent order of the universe.

And this comparison highlights the most basic weakness of Professor Rabb's model. It assumes that European society was basically stable, that authority was assured and harmony the accepted assumption of its creative geniuses. Somehow, "in the 50 years around 1500", something went wrong; but Professor Rabb does not tell us why this might have happened. If he had looked as carefully at the period before the crisis as he looked at that after it, he might well have had some doubts. The late Middle Ages, with its deadly plagues, its peasant revolts, its papal schisms, its heresies and religious wars, not to speak of the distortions of the Gothic style or the "grandeur and immensity subduing uncertainty" of its cathedrals—could one not here posit a quest for authority, a struggle for stability, just as convincingly as in the seventeenth century? And how did the crisis end? Professor Rabb says: "My view is that the heresies and conflicts grew so out of hand that they simply had to be stopped and for that reason". Well, perhaps; but it seems a rather weak conclusion after what has gone before.

I would suggest that Professor Rabb looks at European history the wrong way round. Its basic characteristic is not stability but instability, not harmony but dynamic change. It is also very complex, with different institutions, ideas and even aesthetic sensibilities both moving at different speeds in accordance with their own inherent logic of development and, at the same time, interacting with each other in different and changing measure. From time to time, since the fall of the Roman Empire, Europe has experienced periods of relative stability, but they have usually been relatively short and have, perhaps, been getting shorter. The last one was the last three decades of the nineteenth century. It is such periods of stability which need to be explained historically, just as much as the periods of crisis. Neither can be taken for granted. In the meantime, Professor Rabb's book is well worth reading and arguing with.

The pattern of the plague

By Paul Slack

JEAN-NOEL BIRABEN :
Les hommes et la peste en France et dans les pays européens et méditerranéens
Volume I: La Peste dans l'histoire
455pp. Paris/The Hague: Mouton. 150fr.

Among all the scourges of recorded history, bubonic plague could well claim first place from the sixth to the eighth century and from the fourteenth to the nineteenth, epidemics of the disease ravaged Europe and the Mediterranean lands, bringing death and social dislocation regularly to towns, less frequently but no less tragically to villages and hamlets. There has never been any lack of historical interest in this epic subject. But modern techniques of research in social and demographic history and modern advances in medical knowledge have altered and deepened our appreciation of it. Consequently there has been a real need for a work of synthesis, bringing together local studies and suggesting generalizations about a phenomenon of such universal importance.

Even when confined to Europe and the Mediterranean, however, the task is a Herculean one, demanding familiarity with a vast range of medical and historical literature and calling for the expertise of a social and comparative historian as well as a demographer. But it has been known for some time that Jean-Noël Biraben was assuming the burden and now we have the first of his two volumes.

He has done deals largely with the epidemiology of plague epidemics in some of their demographic aspects. Its successor will survey the changing reactions to plague, the explanations given for it and the methods adopted to control it. Readers will not be disappointed by this volume in so far as its presentation and argument, most convincing, some of them be effective, contrary to the opinion that they were usually futile. Indeed he argues that these measures were in fact effective, sporadically at first in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and then more generally in France in the early eighteenth and in the East in the nineteenth century. By then the movement of plague into Europe had been successfully stopped. Plague was conquered by human endeavour.

This is a conclusion of fundamental importance. Not all of its implications will be generally accepted by historians. Dr Biraben seems often to underestimate the part played by rodents, although he admits in his conclusion that they may have had a role in the spread of plague in towns. At the same time he is inclined to be over-optimistic about the practical success of local authorities in enforcing quarantine measures. These may have been more effectively enforced in the eighteenth century than earlier, but Dr Biraben himself shows that sophisticated regulations did not prevent plague entering Marseilles in 1720.

There is also the problem of why plague disappeared so completely and why the Tuscan precautions were taken no similar precautions were taken. But it is a mark of the interest of this book that in answering some questions of major importance it raises others. Dr Biraben's conclusions command respect and they will be the essential starting-point for future work.

What of the social history of plague, its effects on individuals and communities? Some of these are touched on here. Aspects of family life are explored in a discussion of marriage and fertility rates during epidemics. There is a fascinating and sensible account of the spread of the flagellant movement and of antisemitic scares at the time of the Black Death, both of them epidemic phenomena on which a great deal of popular nonsense has been written. Dr Biraben refers in passing to Pope Gregory the Great's reactions to plague and to those of Provençal villagers. Clearly there will be much more to hear thanks in the next

The unhistorical Hume

By D. D. Raphael

JONATHAN HARRISON :
Hume's Moral Epistemology
131pp. Clarendon Press : Oxford University Press. £4.25.

There are two traditions of scholarship in dealing with the history of philosophy. One is to stick to history, to seek to explain the outlook of a past thinker, what problems he faced and why, what answers he produced. The other is to add philosophical appraisal, to consider whether the past thinker's answers do the job they were intended to do, whether they resolved the problems he faced, whether indeed they are a help in resolving those problems, or similar problems, for us today. I was brought up to follow the second approach and I still think it is the more fruitful. Interest in the history of philosophy is not a purely historical interest. A leading thinker is singled out from among his contemporaries not only because he had a major influence in the past but also because his problems and his answers continue to have life in them. The problems, if not perennial, are at least persistent. So I become a little irritated when historically oriented scholars complain that we should not treat the past as if it were the present, that the history of philosophy should be purely historical, that philosophical criticism of a past thinker is anachronistic and misguided.

The merit of their case, however, becomes more apparent when a modern philosopher writes about a great thinker of the past with no concern at all for history. This is what Jonathan Harrison does in *Hume's Moral Epistemology*. He goes through Hume's arguments step by step, comments on them as he would comment on a paper by a colleague, and says absolutely nothing about the historical background, about the philosophers whom Hume wanted to refute, about those whom he followed and on whom he improved, about the key role of moral epistemology in the formation of his philosophy as a whole. Professor Harrison is a philosopher of considerable ability, and his critical comments on Hume's arguments (even more, his critical comments on the views of present-day philosophers) are usually worth attention. But at times they become (my italics): "*According to this principle*, . . . it is only in two senses, that any affection can be called unreasonable", namely when it arises from a false opinion or leads to action in which the agent is guided by a false opinion. Where there is no such false opinion, "it is not *contrary to reason* to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger".

Professor Harrison comments as follows.

> Hume's . . . premiss . . . seems to me to be false. My dictionary says that "reasonable" can mean sensible, moderate, not absurd, fair. . . . It is not moderate, and is absurd, for me to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger . . . even if I do not have any false beliefs. . . .

Does Professor Harrison really suppose that Hume thought, or even wrote, otherwise? Hume did not say that the word "reasonable" *tout court* could only mean two things, nor did he say, even with qualification, that it would be "reasonable" to prefer the destruction of the world to the scratching of his finger. Should not a reasonable (a sensible, moderate, not absurd, fair) commentary explain to us rather why Hume went out of his way to make an apparently shocking remark?

Here is another example. The gist of Hume's moral epistemology is given in the titles of two sections of his *Treatise*: moral distinctions are derived not from reason but from a moral sense. The term "moral sense" occurs only in the title of the second of these sections; the text refers instead to "feeling" or "sentiment". Hume's later account of the matter in his *Enquiry* on morals does not use the term "moral sense" at all. Professor Harrison has a section of two pages on Hume's "moral sense theory". He tells us that Hume is mistaken in equating "sense" and "sentiment", because the senses give us information about the things we see or hear while sentiments are "emotional reactions".

> There is no such thing as a moral sense organ. There are no "moral light waves" emanating from the actions which we morally assess. . . .

It is a pity that Professor Harrison did not consult his dictionary again on this occasion, for he might then have been reminded that language has a history too. The term "moral sense" as a name for the capacity to draw moral distinctions was coined, rather casually, by Lord Shaftesbury (in a work published in 1699) and then used as a term of art by Francis Hutcheson to refer quite definitely and firmly to *feelings* of approval and disapproval, on the analogy of Locke's *more general term "inner sense"*. Both Locke and Hutcheson learnt and taught philosophy in an environment where Latin was the common language of instruction (though Hutcheson introduced the practice of lecturing in English instead), and for them the word "sense", used in a philosophical context, will have recalled the Latin *sentio* and so have seemed a perfectly natural term for feeling as well as perception. Hume took over and developed Hutcheson's moral epistemology.

But, although Hume followed Hutcheson's moral sense (i.e. moral feeling) theory, he dropped the name "moral sense", perhaps because he foresaw that it was liable to suggest an analogy with the external senses as it did to later writers such as Adam Smith and Thomas Reid. The one and only place where Hume retained the name was in that title of a section of the *Treatise*, probably as a hangover from an earlier draft. In these circumstances it is again not reasonable (meaning, as before, sensible, fair, etc) to criticize Hume on the ground that a moral sense would have to be analogous to the external senses.

I must not give the impression that all, or even most, of Professor Harrison's criticisms are marred by the omission of historical treatment. Many of them show up genuine deficiencies in Hume's position. But their effectiveness is dissipated when they go along with carping criticisms like those I have described earlier, with condescending remarks like "The best I can do for Hume . . . ", and with positive errors like the suggestion that Hume did not distinguish virtues which we respect from virtues which we love. What is lacking above all is an account of the strength of Hume's moral epistemology, to match the examination of its weaknesses. In the last paragraph of his book Professor Harrison says that he thinks Hume was the greatest of British philosophers and one of the greatest of all philosophers. A reader who did not already have a fair knowledge of Hume might well wonder how on earth Professor Harrison has reached that opinion in the light of what he has said earlier. The endless recital of criticisms, some serious, others plainly trivial, with no explanation of why Hume's position is worth all this attention to minute detail, will cause some readers to lose patience, so that they may never get to the final paragraph in which Professor Harrison tells us that, but not why, he thinks so highly of Hume.

What Percy says, goes

By John Foster

C. J. F. WILLIAMS :
What is Truth ?
102pp. Cambridge University Press. £4.50.

C. J. F. Williams's analysis of the concept of truth is founded on the uncontroversial principle that to say that someone's statement is true is to say that things are as he states them to be. But while many have seen this principle as supporting a "correspondence" theory of truth—truth is what is achieved when what is stated matches how things are—Mr Williams takes it to support the more radical conclusion that in predicating truth of a statement, we are not so much describing as, in a special sense, endorsing what is stated. His point is this: to say *S* "What Percy says is true" is, in effect, to say "If Percy says that such and such is the case, then such and such is the case"; it is, in effect, to assert conjointly the (infinitely many) sentences which result from the schema "If Percy says that ——, then ——" by filling the blanks with any declarative sentence of English.

To express this point (as he thinks) more precisely, Mr Williams avails himself of a technical device known in the trade as "substitutional quantification". Using the letter *p* as a variable holding place for declarative sentences, he gives as the propositional analysis (A) of *S* "For some *p*, both Percy says that *p* and *p*"—an analysis which he subsequently refines to reflect the fact that there is a unique statement of Percy's in question.

If Mr Williams is right, then in asserting *S* we do not refer to some abstract semi-propositional entity (what Percy says) and ascribe to it a semantic, quasi-relational property (truth). Rather, we refer to Percy and, as it were, variably assert the same as he says. Truth and its instantiators simply evaporate.

But is Mr Williams's substitutional quantification legitimate? One objection is that his analysis, either provisional or refined, cannot be rendered into plain English, and that technical symbolism is legitimate only in so far as it provides a clearer or simpler way of formulating what we could express without it. Thus the closest we can get to an ordinary language version of *A* is either "There is something which both Percy says that and it is the case that", or "There is something such that both Percy says that it and it is the case that *it*", neither of which is grammatically well-formed. It might be replied that what makes them ungrammatical is an idiomatic rather than a logical constraint. We do, after all, quantify substitutionally over predicate-variables: "There is something (e.g. wise) which both Percy says that Socrates is and Socrates is" is perfectly intelligible. If so, why not extend our usage to quantify over sentence-variables as well?

However, the problem goes deeper. Even with the intelligible quantification over predicate-variables, the intelligibility is hardly manifest in the surface form. For the surface form commits us to using adjectives as names—to saying, for example, "Wise is that which both Percy says that Socrates is and Socrates is". Rather than canonize such solecisms, we should have seek a deeper thalyais of English usage—seek to discern a logically perspicuous "deep structure" in which each word plays its grammatically proper role.

To be fair to him, Mr Williams, like other substitutionalists, tries to explain his analysis of *S*—and to explain other sentences involving substitutional quantification—not by rendering it literally into English, but by appeal to its truth conditions. *A* is true, he tells us, if some sentence can be substituted for *p* whereby "Both Percy says that *p* and *p*" is true. He concedes that this is only a partial explanation since it gives only a sufficient, not a necessary and sufficient, condition for the truth of *A*. But my problem is that I cannot see it as an explanation at all.

For if it were, we could extend it to cover various forms of manifest nonsense, such as substitutional quantification over syllable-variables. Thus using the Greek letter σ as a variable holding place for syllables, we could "explain", in a parallel way, the pseudo-sentence "For some σ, both Percy says that σ-rates is wise and σ-rates is wise", which would be true, for example, if both Percy says that *Socrates* is wise and *Socrates* is wise. If *A* is intelligible, as Mr Williams thinks, it must be shown to be so in some other way. But how, if not by translation into a logically perspicuous sentence of ordinary English?

The roots of the modern

By A. G. Mollard

ERNEST A. MOODY :
Studies in Medieval Philosophy, Science, and Logic
Collected Papers 1933-1969
453pp. University of California Press. £11.

Ernest A. Moody's *Studies in Medieval Philosophy, Science, and Logic*, his collected papers from 1933 to 1969, is particularly welcome in that many of the items are not easily accessible in their original form. The arrangement is chronological, and criticisms that may apply to some of the earlier papers (such as a tendency to underplay the constraints of the Aristotelian context) are quietly neutralized in the later ones. The first paper, of which he rightly says that he is unashamed, is his MA thesis on William of Auvergne. It is the only one hitherto unpublished. The remainder, while ranging widely, centre on his interest in fourteenth-century nominalist thought.

His heroes, so far as he has them, are William of Ockham and John Buridan, on both of whom he has done valuable work in other books. It is fitting that this collection concludes with a general article on each of them. In two other papers Professor Moody does some fine tracking down of historical relations of Ockham and Ockhamism, Giles of Rome ("the incarnation of routine scholasticism — the successful second-rate mind, normally in control of established institutions of learning") is identified as the prime target of many of Ockham's attacks, and a 1340 Paris statute is shown to have been directed against Nicholas of Autrecote rather than Ockham, and indeed to have paralleled Ockham's own views.

In the brief intellectual autobiography prefaced to the book (which includes mention of a stint of cattle-rustling in Texas from 1851 to 1958), Professor Moody asserts that his interest in the Middle Ages was not to uncover superstition or recover an age of faith, but to investigate the roots of the modern. "I have been concerned with the way in which some of our most cherished modern ideas, institutions, and values had their origins in the medieval period."

With the inspiration but without the extravagance of Pierre Duhem, a sizable part of Professor Moody's work has been in the history of mechanics. The general paper, "Laws of Motion in Medieval Physics", is no longer satisfactory, but the long seminal study, "Galileo and Avempace", is of enduring worth, and should be read in conjunction with the later and shorter "Galileo and his Precursors". Professor Moody's thesis is that Galileo's early work on motion, done during his Pisan period, was importantly influenced by a tradition going back to the twelfth-century Spanish Arab Ibn Bājja (Avempace) and before him to the sixth-century Alexandrian John Philoponus. This "Platonist" position was characterized by the use of a self-expending impressed force to explain the continuance of projectile motion, and by the ascription of a natural finite speed of fall to bodies, which they would have *in vacuo* and which was reduced by the presence of the medium. On the other hand Galileo's measurement was to be seen as benefiting from characteristically fourteenth-century doctrines of motion, notably at "impetus" of permanent nature, and a concern with mathematical analysis of acceleration.

This thesis involves a whole cluster of issues, and has to defend itself on numerous fronts. Professor Moody alludes to points of dissent by the late Anneliese Maier. Her criticisms must certainly be taken seriously, particularly when they concern the mathematical expression of the Avempacian position on fall, but are they peripheral or essential to the main thesis? Further investigation will also need to comprehend more recent work by such scholars as Michael Wolff, Solomon Pines, Edward Grant, William Wallace and Charles Schmitt.

If the seventeenth century provides a natural, though dangerous, foil against which to discuss medieval views of motion, twentieth-century developments in mathematical logic have promoted interest and respect for medieval logic, and aided a more accurate assessment. Professor Moody's *Truth and Consequence in Medieval Logic* was an outstanding contribution to this process.

It well displayed the subtle medieval finesse in this area, but his translations into modern logical notation sometimes gave the impression of forcing the material into an ill-fitting straitjacket. This book's excellent general study, "The Medieval Contribution to Logic" emphasizes differences as well as similarities between medieval and modern logic. In another essay with a logical slant Buridan's Horse is introduced to rival his Ass.

Professor Moody is not averse to the occasional appeal to the analogy of history and, in "The Age of Analysis" he appeals to the Middle Ages to help make the course of twentieth-century philosophy intelligible. In both cases criticism followed upon equanimity the possibility of the new Renaissance.

In the zoological lumber-room

M. J. S. Rudwick

...R P. WINSOR :
...ish, Jellyfish and the Order of ... of Nineteenth-Century ...
Yale University Press.

...eteenth-century biology had ...n dominated, in the eyes of an ...der generation of historians of ...ence, by the scientific Everest of ...'s *Origin of Species*; their inter...tations were structured around ...s peak, mapping the work of ...rwin's "forerunners" in the ...earlier part of the century and the ...reception of his own theory after ...1859. Organic evolution was rightly ...regarded as a great unifying theory ...in biology; yet apart from a gen...erally simplistic treatment of the ..."science and religion" issue, the ...evolutionary debates were rarely ...seen in a broader context of other ...intellectual developments. A ...younger generation of scholars, ...more concerned to integrate the ...history of science with other ...branches of history, has tended ...recently to swing to the opposite extreme, and to interpret nineteenth-century biological research as little more than a surface froth concealing a deeper turbulence that was generated by metaphysical questions of "man's place in nature" and ideological struggles over the relation of nature to human society. Mary Winsor has chosen to swim against this fashionable tide, however, and to study a particular aspect of nineteenth-century biology in its own terms and in full technical detail. To appreciate her argument requires some knowledge of the marvellous diversity of some relatively unfamiliar animals; but should not the historian of science, like the economic historian, have the right to expect his or her readers to make an effort to grapple with the technical subject-matter concerned?

The starfish, jellyfish and other invertebrate animals that are Dr Winsor's subject-matter have been neglected by both the historiographical traditions she has mentioned: by the first, because they rarely contributed crucial evidence to the apparently central "species question"; and by the second, because of all organisms they seem the most irrelevant to the attempt to interpret man himself in naturalistic terms. Yet the study of these so-called "lower" animals engaged the attention of many of the best biologists of the century, including Darwin himself. This surely suggests that in interpreting nineteenth-century research historians have not been looking in all the relevant directions. Although Darwin focused most of his argument in the *Origin* on the question of how any one species could have changed into another, Dr Winsor rightly emphasizes that he also had a broader and even tougher task: "If his theory was to seem credible to his fellow naturalists, Darwin would have to account for the shape of nature." He had to show that his theory could explain not only small-scale trans-specific change, but also the large-scale pattern of structural and functional diversity among organisms. The mapping of this "shape of nature" was the achievement of biological classification, a branch of research that had not yet succumbed to the arrogant scorn of physical scientists for whom it is mere "stamp-collecting" and not "real science".

Dr Winsor begins her analysis with the work of Georges Cuvier at the beginning of the century. Cuvier's comparative anatomy consolidated and codified the recognition of the great diversity of the invertebrate animals; he raised both the mollusc group and what he called articulates (the arthropods of modern zoology) to the same status as all the vertebrates put together, and he placed the remaining "lower" invertebrates in a fourth *embranchement*, the "radiates". It is with the fate of this "zoological lumber-room", as T. H. Huxley later called it, that Dr Winsor is concerned. The story is important, not least because the gradual recognition of the astonishing variety and complexity of the radiates transformed the large-scale "shape of nature" that any causal interpretation (such as evolution) had to explain.

The complexity of the radiates first became apparent in the 1830s from two different lines of research. Ehrenberg's microscopical studies of the supposedly simplest animals, such as "infusoria" and "polyps", revealed an unexpected degree of anatomical and functional complexity; and Michael Sars's painstaking study of other lowly marine animals led to the even more unexpected discovery of the "alternation of generations", in which a single species passes through a cycle of two radically different forms—a fixed "polyp" and a mobile "jellyfish". In a later chapter, Dr Winsor reconstructs from manuscript evidence the way in which Huxley was groping for some kind of explanation of the emerging pattern of animal diversity, and she shows his sympathy for the often maligned theorizing of William Macleay.

At about the same time, Louis Agassiz was trying to bring order to the echinoderms (starfish, sea urchins etc) by systematic study and comparative anatomy with evidence from embryology and palaeontology. By mid-century the diversity of the radiates—and indeed of the animal kingdom generally—could no longer be explained primarily in adaptive terms, as Cuvier had tried to do; in the opinion of Agassiz and many other biologists it had to be sought in an underlying and more abstract or transcendental "plan" of nature. Before summarizing Darwin's own interpretation of this plan in her final chapter, Dr Winsor shows us Agassiz's son Alexander engaged in dialogue with Fritz Müller on the applicability of evolutionary theory to these complex questions (she transcribes the relevant letters in an appendix). This chapter is a fine case study of the "Darwinian debate" at the level of detailed technical discussion, a level which historians of ideas tend to sweep over like intellectual Concordes, at high speed, with loss of noise and not much payload.

Having said that, however, it must be admitted that Dr Winsor's work shows the limitations as well as the strengths of the "internalist" tradition in the history of science. It is thoroughly grounded in a close analysis of technical scientific articles (and some manuscripts), and any reader with a little knowledge of zoology will readily appreciate why so many first-class scientists were attracted to this area of research in the nineteenth century. Yet the underlying intellectual structure remains insufficiently analysed. Dr Winsor too lightly dismisses eighteenth-century classifications as mere devices of convenience, and she minimizes the role of teleological reasoning in nineteenth-century biology. She could have used her material to emphasize how strongly a non-developmental grid-like mode of knowledge was still flourishing and fruitful half a century after the date set by Michel Foucault for its abrupt demise, and she also leaves this reader with a sense of loss at the "order of life" was affected by any sense of "crisis" on the eve of the alleged "Darwinian revolution". Almost in spite of herself, in her last work she ends by perpetuating the "all roads led to Darwin" view of nineteenth-century biology.

Dr Winsor's analysis remains somewhat in a vacuum not only in intellectual but also in social terms. She could legitimately claim that the "externalist" dimension lay outside her terms of reference. But her fascinating material raises important questions about the role of contingent opportunity in biological research (for example, Sars, the minister with a rich marine fauna on his Norwegian doorstep, and Huxley's world voyage as surgeon on HMS Rattlesnake); about the importance of artistic ability and the aesthetic sense (the craftsmanship of her biologists is not in all cases adequately reproduced here); about the role of new instruments and institutions (such as Ehrenberg's use of the much improved microscopes of the 1830s, and the later foundation of marine research stations); and about the internationalism of the scientific community and the relation between intellectual "centre" and "periphery" (important research on radiates was done in all major and many minor countries in Europe and America). More importantly, however, Dr Winsor's chosen framework of analysis systematically—though innocently—conceals the questions that might begin to bridge the gap between an internalist analysis of the technical arguments and an externalist study of the social circumstances of the research. Phrases such as "most scientists" and "it was widely recognized", like the similar language which characterizes modern scientific literature, slide too easily over the crucial questions about the ways in which the implied consensus of scientific knowledge was generated and maintained within a scientific "community" which existed then, as now, within a wider society.

Pan, fan and man

By J. Wreford Watson

CHARLES B. HUNT :
Death Valley
Geology, Ecology, Archaeology
...Hopkins University of California Press. £10.45.

Death Valley, California, was made an American National Monument in 1933. Superb in scenery, of unique geological interest, with fascinating life forms and habits, and an intriguing though not particularly distinguished archaeological history, the valley has attracted world-wide attention. Charles B. Hunt, who has long studied the region, has drawn all these aspects together in a book which though in its parts highly analytical, is, taken as a whole, a triumph of synthesis.

He begins with what the visitors see—the great salt pan at the bottom of the valley, the skirt of spreading fans above, the strand lines of long-lost lakes, and the fault-ridden ranges going up to the blue and cloudless sky; he then leads the visitor more close to note the texture of the scene, the smooth mud-salts of the lower playa, the rough white salts of the rim, the cobble-like surface of the fans, the low-edge of eroded limestone, the shiny volcanics, and the broad-shouldered Precambrians. He takes us still closer until the unique flavour of the place appears in the different salts that have crystallized out, from the dark carbonates at the higher levels, through the sulphates on the fans and terraces, to the brilliant white chlorides in the lower pans. These have evaporated out for lack of water. Evaporation is 140 times precipitation. Yet water, because of its scarcity, is crucial. Professor Hunt takes us from this single perennial stream, Willow Creek, up from water, upon the intermittent rain fault, upon the intermittent streams, occasionally full after unusual rains, but usually dying away as it flows into Death Valley, to the strange swamps that characterize lateral hollows, like Cottonball Basin, fed by underground seepages, to the brackish springs at the edge of fans and pan, where waters sink into the gravelly fans come out against the flat salt beds.

One is slow in coming upon man. But, then, man was seldom at home in the valley. Moreover, it was only the most primitive of men who came; they made little impact. They were dependent on pluvial periods when there was more vegetation and game, as for example towards the end of the pleistocene, when the lake basin was covered by a lake thirty feet deep. Subsequent occupation occurred round springs, often by very poor Indians who could not face competition for better areas by more successful communities. About AD 1100 the "modern Indian presence began with the Shoshones, but consisted more of occasional visits than consistent settlement. That was left to the American pioneer blundering on his way west but finding in the deathly conditions of desert scrub and waste, a wealth of salt, borax, talc and gypsum. Yet the deposits were not large, or if large were too impure, and mining, which began in 1881, had all but finished by 1910. Relict features are of interest now only for its rarity. *The New World is* the frequent attempts at speculative reconstruction such as make many uninformed much more meaningful, but where imagination is not involved, a rather matter-of-fact description of detail, for example of the chemical composition of the salt deposits, becomes dull and irksome. The book is therefore rather uneven, with fascinating observations, sometimes brilliantly put, and with intriguing interpretations, but also with involved analyses and occasionally tedious listings. The archaeology is set out with a beautiful simplicity, while the description of mines and mining techniques is livened by a most original account of a camp fever, especially of the bottles discarded by man! Touches of this kind help to make the book more readable.

While most of the work gives a sense of remoteness, as is perhaps proper from the hand of a scientist, it is here and there made immediate and relevant by compelling comments on the need to conserve what the valley offers; to keep its beauty intact, to preserve areas of outstanding geological interest, to make more of the scant supply of archaeological remains, and to sustain wild life and the natural vegetation. Death Valley is a great national monument. Monuments should not be chipped, as by mining, or defaced, as by the pressure of too many uncaring people. Fortunately the valley is administered as a park by officials with both good sense and a strong view of what is proper: with them the heritage of the past is worked into an enjoyment of the present.

Ancient Americas

By Norman Hammond

WARWICK M. BRAY, EARL H. SWANSON and IAN S. FARRINGTON :
The New World
151pp. Elsevier/Phaidon. £3.95.

Books combining breadth of vision with accuracy and attraction in the field of archaeology are rare enough to be worth remark; on this side of the Atlantic a book which covers the whole of the Americas in prehistory, and still possesses those virtues, is the more valuable for its rarity. *The New World is* unusual in fulfilling many of these hopes, which it does by combining an essay by each of its three authors, who cover North, Central and South America respectively, with an introduction outlining the history of American archaeology, and four "visual essays" on the spectacular sites of Chaco Canyon, Teotihuacan and Machu Picchu, and on the work of Don Crabtree, whose replication of flint tools would have won the admiration of the previous Columbian Americans themselves.

The three essays are commendably up to date, that on North America including the very early Old Crow site recently discovered in Alaska, which suggests that man had entered America from Siberia some 30,000 years ago and confirms the early dates already known from the early dates already known from the early dates and the site of Californian skeletons and the site of Tlapacoya in Mexico. The beginnings of agriculture in Mesoamerica are discussed on the basis of the Tehuacan evidence, but the more recent work in Oaxaca receives only passing mention. The chapter on South America is disappointing, in that Ian Farrington has restricted himself to the easy and oft-trodden territory of the Central Andes and ignored the vital formative area of Ecuador and Colombia in the northern Andes as well as the whole of the Amazon basin. The excuse that "very little work has been carried out in the Amazon basin" shows a lamentable ignorance of the investigations of Lathrap and of Meggers and Evans, and of the running feud between their schools of thought that has made Amazonian archaeology a most entertaining spectacle for the past decade.

The other, unfortunate, lacuna stem from the divided coverage: no one seems to have thought about the north Mexican region, and more seriously there is nothing on the highly important area of Central America from Honduras to Colombia, where the sophisticated goldworking techniques of the New World originated. Since Warwick Bray has specialized in the study of pre-Columbian metallurgy, it is a grave disappointment to find the topic effectively omitted from even so brief a book as this.

Perhaps we should not expect too much: it is possible for one man to cover the whole of American archaeology with even-handed competence, *vide* Gordon R. Willey's *Introduction to American Archaeology*; but those two massive volumes are for the scholar. For all its shortcomings *The New World* is an admirable introduction, extremely well produced and illustrated, to much of what is relevant in the field, and may stimulate the general reader to further investigation.

Dateline Golgotha

By Marigold Johnson

STUART JACKMAN:
The Burning Men
234pp. Faber and Faber. £3.95.

Those who grimace at the thought of a novel which retells New Testament events through the cheeky, abrasive voice of a television reporter sent to make a schmaltzy documentary of Jerusalem should first note that Stuart Jackman has had some convincing compliments, not only for the first two volumes of the trilogy which *The Burning Men* completes, but also as a thriller-writer. Forget, if you can, Dorothy Sayers and Bernard Miles and all the others who have tried out twentieth-century idiom on the Christian story; I remembered the desperation of a teacher telling us to do a newspaper report on the conversion of Saul, and how unconvincing our references to flying saucer visions sounded. Here is Mr Jackman's Saul Trosx, in "an expensively cut tan gaberdine suit worn with a cream silk shirt and a maroon bow tie", greeting the camera crew on the Eilat airstrip:

> He was an astonishingly ugly man; in his middle thirties, slight, short, with a head too big for his body and a mat of coarse black hair cut close in the Roman fashion. . . He had a wide mouth, an orator's mouth, full-lipped above the angular, acne-scarred chin. His nose, aggressively Semitic, jutted below the network of lines etched into his forehead. His eyes were large, grey-green. The left one, marred by an appalling squint, wept continuously, the tears plastering his eyelashes to the lower lid.

It takes a chapter or two to adjust to the author's ingenious and racy telescoping—an Empire television network worried about the ratings, while Caiaphas demands a programme celebrating the harvest to redress the harm done to Jewish-Roman relations by young Cass Tennel's earlier scoop interview with the guard who allowed a raid on the Tomb; the helicopter almost scuppered by the sudden maelstrom that precedes the *shekinah*, that "pillar of cloud by day and fire by night" which descends on scared followers in a house by the Zion Gate. Like any good reporter, Cass wants a story-line, and because he himself is half-persuaded that Jesus Davidson's "legalized murder" was the start of revolution, he insists on covering the trial and stoning of the young Stephen Michaelides, charged with sedition and blasphemy. One vanished body had convinced a few, but—and this is perhaps Mr Jackman's argument for continuing the story—those for whom "the physical reappearance of Davidson would always be slightly suspect, by myth to clothe an idea . . . would yet be moved to believe by the brutal killing of one of its followers. Was this, in the end, the basic human tragedy, that given the choice of life or death we inevitably chose death?"

The thriller idiom is well sustained—Cass is a convincingly coarse-mouthed, shrewd and cynical newsman—and under the sometimes embarrassingly flash 1970s slang—"no way", "no-event", "super-trung"—the theological points are wittily put across. When Cass questions the possibility that a man can "just turn up out of nowhere in a beam of light", he is reminded that it happens all the time on television; improved technology will bring it into the image but the man, because the speed of light is like eternity, unrelated to time and place. It is a pity, however, that Mr Jackman has Cass end both his hectic assignment and the book with the kind of peroration seldom heard from a pulpit, let alone the box; the suspension of disbelief so adroitly managed by having a tough narrator contemptuous of his television audience makes the resurrection message sound a little too like a sop to those who will undoubtedly use Mr Jackman's trilogy as a teaching aid for sceptical children.

Opting out

By Catherine Peters

ANN TYLER:
Searching for Caleb
309pp. Chatto and Windus. £3.75.

An American family chronicle of five generations of Baltimore respectability; a black sheep in each generation; an atmosphere of genteel, gradual decay. It sounds a predictable choice for the library list. But Ann Tyler's cool handling of her material is original and exceptionally funny.

Caleb Peck disappeared in 1912, but it was nearly fifty years before anyone seriously thought of looking for him. He had been a typical member of a family who knew their duty and did it. They wore the right clothes, ate the right food, used the right furniture in houses at the right address. The envelope for the bread-and-butter letter would be ready, addressed and stamped, before the visit took place.

Caleb's disappearance was so out of character that at first it was not noticed, and then, like any other eccentricity that could not be suppressed, quietly ignored. No one could ever suppress, or ignore his great-nephew Duncan, a trouble-maker from birth. When he too broke out of the tightly introverted family his good little cousin Justine was dispatched to bring him back. Instead she married him, and they embarked on a wild nomadic life ruled by Duncan's determination not to be a success. Whenever anything he started looked like turning out well—goat farming, cabinet-making, selling pets or antique farm machinery—he found some way of wrecking the enterprise and moving on to a more hopeless and bizarre occupation. Justine, outwardly adjusted to living on takeaway pizza and hurdly bothering to unpack the cardboard boxes between moves from one broken-down house to another, went along with Duncan's vagaries, conforming, as she had done all her life, to what other people expected of her. To her distress her daughter Meg, longing for respectability she has never known, is trapped by a more obvious conformity into a dreary dead-end marriage. Nor does Caleb turn out to be the wild adventurer of their imaginings, but a small-town failure.

It becomes clear in the course of this robust, witty novel that Ann Tyler is concerned with an existential examination of the nature of freedom. The choices, between staying put and running away, conforming or rebelling, are not simple as they seem, perhaps not in themselves important: it is the use made of them that matters, the hands of a less imaginative writer, this dimension of the novel might have seemed irritating or obtrusive, but Miss Tyler's characters have too much vitality for this.

Occupational hazards

By R. G. Popperwell

TARJEI VESAAS:
The House in the Dark
282pp. Peter Owen. £4.75.

The House in the Dark (*Huset i mørkret*) was published in the autumn of 1945, but was started in November, 1944, during the German occupation of Norway. Thus apart from *The Great Cycle* (*Det store spelet*, 1934) and *The Seed* (*Kimen*, 1940) it is the earliest of the eight novels by Tarjei Vesaas which, according to the information I have, have now been translated into English. *The House in the Dark* appeared when Vesaas already had some seventeen novels, collections of short stories and plays to his credit, and it continued the new, symbolic direction which his work had taken with *The Seed*.

At first *The House in the Dark* might seem to be one of those novels characteristic of the immediate post-war period in Norway, and well represented in the work of many of Vesaas's contemporaries, where the genesis of the traitor and the motivation of the hero are scrutinized with the fundamentalism endemic in much Norwegian literature. Here, however, the individual psychology of the characters is of secondary importance: Vesaas has sought instead to depict, partly in allegorical terms, the psychological impact of the Occupation on the whole community. At the time of its appearance *The House in the Dark* evoked, almost unbearably, the claustrophobic, menacing atmosphere of the Occupation. Today one can look at it more dispassionately.

The house in the darkness is a metaphor for Norway during those years. The house creaks and cracks under the strains imposed on it and its inhabitants. In the cellars the resistance is burrowing away in the darkness seeking to blast the Centre, the headquarters of the occupying forces, where the Arrow men have their being and from where they conduct their terror. When they go out the members of the underground cling closely to the walls in dark side-streets: the way to the centre, by contrast, and the Arrow men themselves, gleam with light from shining arrows.

It is a setting which could be thought to have a touch of science fiction about it: robot-like figures manipulate the switches that open the steel door to let in and out the vehicle (*bogie*—its translation as *van* is far too utilitarian) which scours the streets sucking in victims. There is melodrama too — an invisible finger traces a message on the table of the informer. However, the setting also provides a common background which throws into relief the reactions of the characters and their human qualities: Stig (the Home Front leader) and his associates; Martin, the stamp collector; the Arrow Polisher who works for the Arrow men. Neither the terror of the Arrow men nor the iron discipline of the underground can prevent the human from breaking through. Stig gets caught because he cannot bear to tear himself away from his family and his associates, although the organization has ordered him to leave the country. The traitorous Arrow Polisher does what he does (so he persuades himself) for his children, but he also recognizes the need for atonement after he has betrayed Stig. The swashbuckling underground man Stein, the sentry at the Centre, and the controlling Brain at the Centre, all find that they cannot become entirely *hommes machines*.

It is implicit, however, that the "house" has an overriding right to the loyalty of its inhabitants and that when that is lacking normal virtuous effort may be a perversion. Thus the Arrow Polisher prides himself on doing an honest job and being a good father. Martin the philatelist, an expert on perforations and watermarks, tries to practise non-involvement, shutting himself up and getting on with his "own work". The forced labour of the concentration camp is a perversion of the work of the hands. The darkness of the cellars becomes the light of virtue, the brilliantly lit corridors of the Arrow men the black night of inhumanity. There is no doubt that at times the heavily symbolic mode of presentation becomes unnecessarily obfuscatory, though it is the obliqueness of the novel which gives it validity beyond its "local" setting—a setting which never receives specific mention.

Olla podrida

By John Butt

JOSE-LUIS VILALLONGA:
Furin!
Translated by Robert Speaight
153pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £3.50.

This strange book originally appeared in Paris in 1974. It was recognized then for the fantasy it is, so it is odd that it should now be inflicted on the English-speaking public: Lorca's death is obscure enough without this. A prefatory note announces that "most of the historical details" were received from eyewitnesses to the events, in which case there must have been a peeping tom in every bar and bedroom in Granada in 1936. What one can recognize as more or less fitting is that when Lorca is lacking normal virtuous effort may be a perversion. Thus the Arrow Polisher prides himself on doing an honest job and being a good father. Martin the philatelist, an expert on perforations and watermarks, tries to practise non-involvement, shutting himself up and getting on with his "own work". The forced labour of the concentration camp is a perversion of the work of the hands. The darkness of the cellars becomes the light of virtue, the brilliantly lit corridors of the Arrow men the black night of inhumanity. There is no doubt that at times the heavily symbolic mode of presentation becomes unnecessarily obfuscatory, though it is the obliqueness of the novel which gives it validity beyond its "local" setting—a setting which never receives specific mention.

Incident-prone

By Frances Gibb

JUDITH MARO:
The Remembered Gate
268pp. Swansea: Christopher Davies. £2.95.

Talya, a young Jewish teacher in Palestine during the last years of the British mandate, witnesses an attack on local police headquarters. Jewish activists take a British inspector hostage for the release of a member of their group under sentence of death. With both parties seeking her allegiance, she quickly finds that the position of innocent onlooker is untenable. The question is—if she has to take action—whether she can steer a middle way.

The Remembered Gate is about the difficulty of living in a community where normality "means no more than a brief pause between incidents", where fear is free-floating and everywhere is "the invisible threat". It is also about how a public conflict seeps through to private situations and relationships; and the difficulty of determining what constitutes "right" action; when no action can be neutral.

The title, taken from *Little Gidding*, indicates a homecoming: the attempt of the Jews to return to their land, both in body and spirit. Both produce conflict; as apparent in the resistance to the British as it is on a personal level.

Among the British there is doubt about their role and the methods of maintaining it. Among the Jews are those such as Biram, a Kibbutz leader, who wants the Jews to have a home but without violence: his protest takes the form of smuggling Jews into the country in defiance of the quota. There are those, on the other hand, such as Abel, who do not believe "anything would change without a charge of dynamite". There is also the uncertain place of the Arab, represented in the novel by Khalil, the shoeshine boy; messenger, spy and confidant, caught between two sides.

Judith Maro has much to say and she says it well. The theory is closely bound with action and the several strands are all finally wrapped up in a neat test of Talya's loyalties.

Pit propaganda

By Alasdair Maclean

GORDON PARKER:
Lightning in May
186pp. Bachman and Turner. £3.95.

Gordon Parker's second novel is set in a north-east mining village and concerns the General Strike and the events leading up to it. John King, horn, fresh from medical school, arrives in the village as assistant to drunken old Dr Jenkins. Gradually he loses his snobbish distaste for the grim working-class life around him. He comes to realise that the miners are really the salt of the earth. He falls in love with Ruth, who is work-worn and weary but also fine and gentle and has luminous green eyes. At the end of the book he is jailed for his part in helping the miners to derail the Flying Scotsman, though he had only been trying to stop them committing this dastardly deed, knowing them to have been turned into frenzied animals by evil communist agitators.

It is easy to make fun of Mr Parker and not altogether unfair. In his book people's eyes continually narrow while they snort their replies through clenched or gritted teeth. The villains have whining or smarmy voices and pulpy like skin. The miners are honest, hard-working northerners who only want a decent life for themselves and their families. The communists are southern fanatics, slaves to a totalitarian doctrine and, moreover, one of them is a homosexual.

Mr Parker can organize his story. His novel is reasonably readable. He shows some feeling for what he writes about. But he needs to stop dealing in real people and real language rather than the caricature of both he offers. I think also that he—if it is his idea—ought to stand on his own feet and stop relying on prominemtly advertised forewords by figures such as Sir Derek Exra and Lord Ted Willis.

The revision of the *STC*

By David Rogers

Bibliographical Society (and, through Quaritch's timely help, a wider public, too) with basically what he had initially proposed, a brief record of what books were then known to survive and where copies could conveniently be found, in the main public collections if present there, but if not, then elsewhere. His list was "restricted almost entirely to main entries in alphabetical order", and his preface to the work warned its future users against all the shortcomings of which he himself was so plainly conscious.

Pollard's original *STC* was published fifty years ago this year, and half a century of intensive use by an ever-increasing number of readers has proved its essential soundness. The people who have had most cause to be grateful for its existence have understandably been the most keen to see its deficiencies made good. Among those who interleaved their copies in 1926 and started to note additions and corrections was the distinguished American librarian and bibliographer, W. A. Jackson. His devouring passion for looking at books wherever he went (even weekends were lost for him if no collection could be found to open for his eager inspection) began to make the pages and margins of his copy thick with his neat annotations, recording both his own discoveries and those passed on to him by others. To the pursuit of information about the *STC* and everything relating to it he brought all those gifts which made him outstanding in so many fields; driving energy and inexhaustible enthusiasm, clarity of mind, grasp of detail, patience, and a phenomenal memory, together with complete bibliographical mastery. He was also a man who could elicit practical assistance in many forms from numberless devoted friends. Gradually it became obvious that here was one who had the energy, the ability and the dedication to take charge of what alone was worthy of so important an undertaking, namely a total revision of the *STC*, to bring every entry, old and new, to a uniform level of accuracy and completeness. When early in the 1950s Jackson began to marshal his notes and to exchange weekly airletters only a single one among the multiple factual statements embodied in each entry.

Out of possibly 33,000 or more numbered entries in the second *STC*, it would appear that an average of at least one in every four has been interpolated by decimal point into the old number sequence. Every such interpolation marks either a new work or a new edition or a newly found issue or variant, or an item that has shifted its place by re-dating or by attribution to another author or leading. This figure, however approximate, gives probably the fairest indication of how massive, during fifty years of revision, has been the accumulation of additions and corrections, though it does not show the equally impressive quantity of new information added to so many entries, which retain their original numbering. In the tracking down and quoting of copies the tally of libraries cited often enough to warrant using an abbreviation for them has risen from less than 150 in the first *STC* to over 460 in the second, showing how systematic coverage of holdings has been extended threefold; many additional collections are cited occasionally if fewer than five copies have been found on one or both sides of the Atlantic.

Has all this vast effort of revision accomplished what it set out to do? No experienced bibliographer, above all in a field so huge, would claim to have achieved completeness, though *STC* is committed to aim at nothing less. In fact, the line which leads towards bibliographical completeness is an asymptote, that is, it approaches ever closer to its objective but does not meet it within a finite distance. As Pollard foresaw in his edition, time will gradually reveal gaps even in the second *STC*, but it will also help to fill them, and has already begun to do so. The volume now published has five pages of addenda and corrigenda, and the years will certainly bring more. But it can reasonably be forecast already that no such total rework of this period will ever again need doing. The enormously increased amount of material now accessible through the second *STC* will undoubtedly lead in turn to the discovery of new authors and titles, of new identifications of texts and translations, of previously hidden hands at work in all that goes to the production of a printed book. But however surprising, satisfying and delightful such discoveries may be in themselves and in detail, they will only fill in minor gaps here and there. The new facts will take their place within the great structure we now have before us. They cannot be of a quantity or a kind which will appreciably alter either its proportions or its appearance.

When a catalogue approaches completion in its own terms, the close of the bibliographer's main endeavour has been reached, but the life of the book has prefaced in only just beginning. The pleasures of the chase itself may bring the bibliographer all the reward he asks for his arduous toil, but its justification lies in the usefulness and reliability of the instrument he puts into the reader's hand. A trustworthy and informative guide to the writings by or about a given author is a priceless boon for any student of a man's life and influence. What gratitude, therefore, will generations of future students owe to this work, which, on the widest possible basis of cooperative research, affords comprehensive and reliable information about all the English men and women who, between the Wars of the Roses and the eve of another civil war, whether as authors, translators, editors or publishers, used the printing press to reach a public audience. This is no selection; they are *all* here by name, and so are countless others whose names are yet unknown but whose books are recorded here.

A work on this scale cannot be compared with anything similar, for none exists. This is unquestionably the most extensive finding-list in existence which records all the known printed materials which survive from any major culture during a given period of its history. Granted that the field of earlier printing was smaller in Britain than in contemporary Italy, Germany, France or Spain, yet none of these countries has published any comprehensive listing of what survives of its national output and where. We of the English-speaking world should be proud that we have such a record, and rejoice that it gathers so rich a harvest from an age which witnessed tremendous ideological upheavals, constitutional struggles, great discoveries, the birth of exact science and a matchless flowering of literature and music.

In the past, those who have used the *STC* have been people constantly occupied in the actual handling of early printed matter, mainly librarians, booksellers, collectors and students of English literature. All these will find the second *STC* much fuller, much easier to use; they will appreciate its abundance of cross-references and a degree of annotation beyond the call of duty. But the book must have a seminal future in the studies of many yet unborn who will never master those niceties of bibliographical elucidation which here give precision and polish to so many entries.

The admirable analytic display of complicated materials (e.g. Liturgies, London) and the new subject-groupings (e.g. Indulgences, Newsbooks, even Bookplates) whereby homogeneous items are pulled together for the first time from innumerable different previous headings, suggest how, through such an alphabetical catalogue, run rich veins of ore yet to be mined by the historians of a hundred different facets of our national life and culture.

We now, and those future historians, will owe an immense debt to the Bibliographical Society for shouldering the heavy cost of financing and publishing this revision, to the Oxford University Press for producing an accurately printed and well-designed volume, pleasant to read and handle, but above all to the editors, past and present, and their helpers and all those the results of whose work and knowledge lie encapsulated here for coming generations to use.

takes both vision and resources to make advances on that scale, and these assets seldom come together. But the obvious merits of Bullen's catalogue set a pattern and gained acceptance for its scope, period and method. It became a habit among bibliographers to make its terms of reference their own.

Under the aegis of the Bibliographical Society works of specialist learning, such as McKerrow's *Dictionary of Printers* (1910) and his *Printers' and Publishers' Devices* (1913) explored in depth material made accessible mainly through the 1884 catalogue. It is, in fact, a weakness of several such great works of reference that they make generalized statements based too exclusively on the British Museum's holdings which, rich to magnificence though they are, yet lack completeness. Their authors were hardly blameworthy, having little else to work from, but an adequate future revision of these essential working tools will need to be based on the fuller evidence now becoming available.

The next important advance was the publication of Sayle's four volumes (1900-07) describing the great holdings of the University Library, Cambridge. These he set out under presses, thereby making valuable contributions to the identification of unnamed printers which (in the days before xerography) could only be undertaken where examples for comparison existed side by side in large numbers. A whole volume for indexes made Sayle's materials easily accessible to the non-specialist, and his main entries were keyed, by page references, to those of Bullen.

Meanwhile, on a smaller scale the 1905 *Short Catalogue of English books* in Marsh's Library, Dublin, introduced the idea of a series describing other collections. Though it had only one successor, the *Handlist of English books* of Emmanuel College, Cambridge (1915), these two publications of the Bibliographical Society were pointing, indeed, were aimed, at the next development. Representative in his thinking, though preeminent in a brilliant generation of scholar-bibliographers, was A. W. Pollard, strategically entrenched at the heart of the British Museum and of the Bibliographical Society. Clearly he had long meditated what the next development should be, before that discussion, apparently fortuitous discussion, during a meeting of the Society in 1918, when he convinced his audience that he had a practicable plan for producing "a short-title catalogue of all extant English books, "leaving a full-dress catalogue to be produced when we know enough to make it a good one". Because he insisted that this was to be an interim list in preparation for something fuller, his plan was recognized as realistic and it quickly gained support. Gilbert Redgrave, the Society's vice-president, instantly promised "personal editorial assistance and also money for a "minimum of paid help", but paid help was always minimal and the resulting *Short-Title Catalogue* of 1926 (hereinafter *STC*) stands as a major achievement of volunteer enterprise.

Once a workable scheme was known to be under way, other great libraries undertook to cooperate, which was crucial, and many individual librarians, scholars and collectors gave generous measures of personal labour. The very enthusiasm which the undertaking aroused brought in offers of help and further material up to the last moment, which caused editorial difficulties. Pollard was aware of the unevenness of his sources and of the lack of checking. He knew that a less piecemeal approach and more time to recruit American help would have ensured greater accuracy and uniformity. Furthermore, enough editorial work was done to reveal that there were more variants than had been expected. To record all those then detected with the accuracy already given to some, let alone checking for fresh ones, would have entailed delays without foreseeable end.

As it was, the compilation took eight years, far longer than Pollard had envisaged. He wrote "all that seemed practicable was to find one volunteer after another"; most of the main workers were aged seventy or over. In the end he chose to present the waiting members of the

Short-Title Catalogue of Books
[illegible]st in England, Scotland and
[illegible] and of English Books
[illegible]ted Abroad
[illegible] edition, revised and en-
[illegible], begun by W. A. Jackson and
[illegible]erine F. Pantzer,
[illegible] 2: I-Z
[illegible]. The Bibliographical Society.

[illegible] praiseworthy library practice of
[illegible]ting duplicate catalogue slips
[illegible]der printer and date enabled
[illegible]rge Bullen, then Keeper of
[illegible]nted Books, to publish in 1884
Catalogue of Books in the Library of the British Museum Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and Books in English Printed Abroad, to the year 1640. After the lapse of nearly a century this work, in three octavo volumes (price thirty shillings!), still deserves attention, if not least because it is the grandfather of the new *Short-Title Catalogue*, of which one volume Sayle's I-Z) has just appeared. Bullen's brief preface says nothing of the thinking behind his pioneer work, but decisions then made set patterns which have proved of enduring value.

Fortunately for all that was to follow, the library of which Bullen set out to record the entire holdings of this one field already possessed was common knowledge then and still true today, the world's largest collection of "English books" as defined them. Indeed, it was the wealth of those holdings rather than any marked historical tendency which decided him to end his catalogue at 1640; had he extended it by only one decade, the inclusion of the Thomason tracts would have more than doubled the number of items to be described. To stop at a manageable date which embraced Jacobean as well as Elizabethan literature, had to get into print, were decisions which benefited editor and users alike. Bibliographically, a book in hand is worth (to adopt a familiar British Museum Catalogue phrase) two or more works on the shelves.

By "English books" were meant those printed within Britain (whatever their language), together with those printed abroad which were either in one of the vernaculars of these islands or, as for example in Latin liturgies for local rites, expressly for use here. This definition, though not explicitly stated, is easily grasped, and contrasted with the purely language basis on which the British Museum had already by then published several important catalogues of its holdings, mainly oriental. Of equal importance for the future was the understanding that "books" on the 1884 title-page included even single leaves, such as proclamations and broadsides. In effect, therefore, this became a comprehensive catalogue of all printed pieces; not length, literary merit nor historical interest were criteria for inclusion or exclusion.

Unlike previous works by Ames, Herbert and Dibdin which described the corpus of earlier English printing, the 1884 catalogue did not take the form of a single alphabetical sequence in accordance with the rules observed in the compilation of the General Catalogue of Printed Books in the British Museum. The unfamiliarity and complexity of those rules for the uninitiate was to a large measure offset for users of the 1884 catalogue by a generous quantity of cross references and by full indexes at the end of the third volume, including subject and class headings, with an alphabetical summary under printers' names.

The appearance in print of so large a body of material, well sorted and digested, could not fail to make an impact. As already implied, publication does itself make an advance towards a bibliographical goal. Only thus do the excellencies and defects of one specific contribution come under public scrutiny; others can test its use, and revision and improvement become possible once there is a scaffolding to build from. True, the British Museum's initiative was not quickly imitated elsewhere. It

Rules for resorting to force

By Richard Hill

D. P. O'CONNELL :
The Influence of Law on Sea Power
204pp. Manchester University Press. £6.50.

"Admiral Mahan", writes D. P. O'Connell in his preface to *The Influence of Law on Sea Power*, "omitted international law from his catalogue of the factors that made for successful resort to sea power." That is too right, and Mahan was not alone either, for the pundits of sea power who followed Mahan were equally remiss. If they mentioned international law at all, it was as a nuisance; but a nuisance that, in the end, could be either manipulated or ignored. The publicists of international law, on the other hand, have often paid tribute to the part sea power has played in the evolution and maintenance of the law. The balance has been wrong somewhere, and Professor O'Connell, with his unique combination of sea experience and deep legal knowledge, is the right person to redress it. He has done so in a singular and important book.

Sea power, even in its narrow definition as the employment of maritime force or forces in a coercive sense, is affected by two major fields of international law. The law of armed conflict and the use of force defines and limits when and how force may be used at sea; and the international law of the sea, due to be recast at the Law of the Sea Conference which met again in New York in March, provides — and unfortunately appears likely to go on providing — many of the grounds for dispute and pretexts for aggression which nations use as justification for the employment of force at sea.

The interactions of these two branches of law as they affect sea power are highly complex, and it is one of the many virtues of this relatively short book that the author traces them with no waste of words. Sometimes the links seem drawn too tight; I have never been convinced by Professor O'Connell's theory that nations in limited conflict at sea will take it as a rule that the conflict should be limited to their respective territorial waters. That theory, based largely on the Vietnam experience, is here advanced more tentatively than in his previous work; as Professor O'Connell says, it is not supported by the history of maritime conflicts since 1970. But it would be a poor sort of book that did not generate such differences of opinion. It is the discussion that matters really, and that is of the highest quality.

For, as well as his knowledge of those two long and twining arms of international law, the author brings to bear a formidable battery of research into forty-odd years of maritime history, ranging from case studies of the Spanish Civil War and the Battle of the River Plate to necessarily shallower but equally apposite work on the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971 and the "Battle of the Paracels" in 1974, in which China sought to establish a claim to an island group and thereby to a large area of continental shelf.

So there are plenty of modern instances in the book, and there are wise comments, too. Constantly one finds a familiar set of facts illuminated by some telling phrase; for example, in a brilliant scene-setting first chapter he disposes of a potentially endless (and dull) argument with one swift blow: "International law may be considered by some to be a simulacrum of law, but it is a phenomenon notwithstanding."

Professor O'Connell shows how this phenomenon has affected, and will affect, naval operations below the level of nuclear war in a wide variety of circumstances. He examines the law governing self-defence, crucial in an age that pays tribute to the United Nations Charter and is subjected to the slanting lights of the media, and links this to the vehicles and systems available to sea power.

Here is another set of interactions, and the chapters "Self-Defence and Weapon Capability" and "Legal Restraints on Weapon Systems" are in many ways the core of the book. Laymen may find they repay a second reading, even though the author, who had to compress a great deal of technical information into a small compass, has done it with admirable lack of jargon. In commenting on such a highly compressed account one should perhaps point out two potentially critical misprints: at the foot of page 71 "radar sensor" should surely read "radar or sonar", and there is a "not" too many in the definition of a non-sub contact on page 76. These are matters of detail certainly, but in such chapters detail counts.

For though the author and others have previously published work on some aspects of the matter, this is the first time that the interaction of law and weapons systems has been treated in anything like this depth. And the conclusions repay the analysis, for they may be far-reaching in their effect. Professor O'Connell does not blink the difficulty of detecting hostile intent or a hostile act by an opponent, much less that of distinguishing between the two. This leads to a dilemma: in time of tension the law demands certainty, but the fog of tension is almost as thick as the fog of war. So Professor O'Connell comes to a concept of initial casualty: "one must expect to sustain an initial casualty before going into action under the cover of self-defence". This unpalatable conclusion is hard to controvert, though where it is linked with the much less legally based and sometimes presentationally unacceptable principle of superior force, the whole matter becomes more debatable. But perhaps the extension was not necessary; the main point had already been made.

There are other conclusions that emerge from the analysis, notably a questioning of the utility of submarines and fixed-wing combat aircraft in conflicts limited by the law—though he allows these units, with their more abrupt and brutal remedies, a place in the overall scheme of maritime deterrence. These are all subjects that will merit deep discussion by those whose business it is to control and organize sea power. Put into practice, they could significantly change the shape of maritime forces. Professor O'Connell shows particularly how surface units optimized for "law-based sea power" can be conceived differently from the 3,000 to 4,000-ton ships fashionable in most navies.

One thing the author has, understandably, not attempted. He divides his legal arenas for the exercise of sea power into "access routes" (particularly straits), the high seas, the territorial sea and the sea bed. There is scarcely any mention of the effect on maritime forces of a 200-mile economic zone. There was no such zone in 1974 when the Schill lectures (on which the book is based) were delivered, there is none as this review is written, but for all I know there will be one when it is printed, and there surely will be one in any generally agreed Law of the Sea Convention. It will merit a new chapter in the book's next edition. More is the pity, for the zone — destined, by the look of the single negotiating text being considered at New York, to be a grey area whose fundamental legal status is ambiguous—will be an arena for turbulence.

The literature of sea power is growing again. Even on the narrow definition which the author of this book wisely chose, no one can now offer a complete doctrine like Mahan's; life is not that simple or ruthless. What this seminal book does is to take one of the factors that nowadays affect sea power and illuminate it most powerfully. There are other facets, some still quite obscured. If, when its time comes to be examined, each is subjected to a light as sharp as Professor O'Connell's, it will have been well served.

Richard Hill is a serving naval officer who was a Defence Fellow in the Department of Laws of King's College London in 1972. The views expressed are his own and do not necessarily represent those of the Government.

THE TIMES

LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

75th Year

AUGUST 27 1976

3,885

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

LIBRARIANS

DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICE
LIBRARIAN, DORCHESTER
(WEST AREA)
Librarian Scale above bar—£2,022-£2,394 (plus £312).
Applicants should be Chartered Librarians with public library experience and interest in providing a library service to institutions and housebound people; the position is based on Dorchester.
Further details and application form, returnable by 13th September, from County Librarian, 1941, Forum, Dorchester (DT1 1XJ). Please quote post number LS 41.

EAST ANGLIA
THE UNIVERSITY
Norwich
APPLICATIONS are invited from qualified LIBRARIANS for a POST of SENIOR LIBRARY ASSISTANT in the Cataloguing Department, salary within the range £2,022 to £2,418 per annum (maximum for Chartered Librarians £2,394).
Applications, together with the names of two referees, should be sent as soon as possible and in any case not later than Monday 13 September to the Librarian, University of East Anglia, University Plain, Norwich NR4 7TJ, from whom further particulars may be obtained. No forms of application are issued.

THE POLYTECHNIC OF CENTRAL LONDON
LIBRARY ASSISTANT
£2,990 to £3,405
Candidates should be qualified librarians, preferably with a graduate qualification or a science discipline. The post is suitable for recently qualified librarians, and offers an opportunity to gain experience in day-to-day work in a busy site library. Salary is determined by qualifications and experience.
Details and application form from the Establishment Officer, Ref. 300, Regent Street, London W1R 7HJ. Tel. 01-580 2020, Ext. 242. Closing date: 10 September, 1976.

THE LABOUR PARTY
requires a
LIBRARY ASSISTANT
(Cataloguer)
preferably with experience in English and foreign language media, and in general library work. Commencing salary £3,405 per annum (inclusive of weighting).
Apply: The Administrative Officer, The Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3JA. Telephone: 01-834 9454.

ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
(University of London)
LIBRARY ASSISTANT required to undertake general duties in both the Medical Library of the new Royal Free Hospital, Hampstead, and the Medical School at Hunter Street.
Salary according to age, qualifications and experience, between £2,628 and £3,192. 30 working days holiday.
Please write for application form to the Assistant Secretary, R.F.H.S.M., 8 Hunter Street, London WC1N 1BP, or telephone 01-837 9505 Ext. 9.

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
SENIOR LIBRARY ASSISTANT
APPLICATIONS are invited for the post of Senior Library Assistant in the University Library. Applicants should be graduates with professional qualifications and experience. An interest in national librarianship would be an advantage.
Salary will be at an appropriate point on the Grade III scale £3,171 to £3,624 per annum, according to age, qualifications and experience. Membership of the appropriate university superannuation scheme will be required.
Applications, with the names and addresses of two referees, should be sent to arrive not later than September 20, 1976, to the Librarian, University Library, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU, from whom further particulars may be obtained. Please quote reference TLS.

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN
APPLICATIONS are invited for TWO POSTS of ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN, tenable from September 1976, in the University Library. Salary on the scale £3,174 to £3,618 per annum.
Assistant Librarians are appointed as Subject Specialists, and candidates should have a well honours degree, preferably in English, Classics or one of the Social Sciences, together with a professional qualification.
Applications (3 copies), comprehensive giving degrees, 1 copy, together with the names and addresses of two referees, should reach the Administrative Assistant, Personnel Office, University of Exeter, Exeter EX4 4QJ, not later than 17th September, 1976. Please quote reference 8/11/3137 in all correspondence.

THEATRES

ARTS THEATRE, 836 2132. 40 Longacre Pl., (off Bloomsbury St.). Dirty Linen by Mon.-Thurs. 8.30, Fri.-Sat. 7 and 9.15. The Happiest Ad with in the West End.

LITERARY

CAPTAIN Thomas Milbourne—International Venture for research already 3000 anecdotes of Captain Thomas Milbourne as very pioneer of the West Coast of Africa and pioneer in opening up the interior and Sarah, his wife, of Tetbury, Gloucestershire. They were wrecked off Cape Blanco (Tenerife) 1811 and died in Sierra Leone 1816.—Write Box 093 TLS, The Times, WC1X 8EZ.

THE IMPERIAL Iranian Embassy is planning to hold in the near future of the Persian language in Britain and may consider assisting schools who have fifteen or more Persian students wishing to study Persian on to GCE. Qualified by the provision of a Teacher of the Persian language. Applications should be made to Education Department, Imperial Iranian Embassy, 16 Prince's Gardens, London, S.W.7.

AUCTIONS

BOOK AUCTIONS, monthly at Brighton. Catalogues £1 (refund). Tavistock (0742) 299038.

BUSINESS SERVICES

AUTHORS' MSS., theses, plays, etc., typed by experts. Special "rush job" service for urgent work. I.B.M. typewriting, automatic typewriting, composing, duplicating, offset litho printing, etc.—Central London Typing Pool, 38-39 Rupert St., W.1. 437 1067 (6 lines).

PETER COXSON Academic and Literary Typing. 876 0305. SW6.

RELIABLE typist will correct typing; reasonable rates. Wall, 212 6281 ext. 149.

FOR SALE & WANTED

AUTOGRAPHS.—For cash prices paid for letters and documents of famous people.—Send for free brochure on "How to sell your Autographs". Charles Hamilton, 50 Park 77th Street New York N.Y. 10021.

PASSIONATE Prodigality, by Tony Champion. Wanted copies 1933 or 1936 edition. State condition and price.—Box 080 TLS, The Times, WC1X 8EZ.

APPOINTMENTS WANTED

MEDIA Resources Officer, qualified as cataloguer, mainly teacher books, appointments resident of East Midlands, organising and promoting software and software use in academic or business education and training. C.D.T.V. officer also, sound software etc.—Write Box 049 TLS, The Times, WC1X 8EZ.

PERSONAL

IMMEDIATE ADVANCES
£50 to £10,000
No security needed
REGIONAL TRUST LTD.
8 Clifford Street
New Bond Street, London, W.1
Tel. 01-734 5083 or 2014

RESEARCH ASSISTANCE, honours graduates who range Arts and Social Science disciplines, undertake commissions including translation.—Access Research Division Major Properties—Knightsbridge Office, 18 Knightsbridge, London, S.W.1?, 01-584 5824.

BOOKS & PRINTS

BOOKS OLD & NEW
OUT-OF-PRINT Nationwide trace: Remit 50p for one title; additional 25p each. Special International Trace: 90p for one; additional 45p each.
NEW (U.K. & U.S.) 1 p. & p. 50p for one title; additional 40p each. 24-hr. credit-card telephone service Barclaycard, Access, American Express. 01-998 1234 or 01-994 6262.
INSTANT VALUATIONS by phone & credit-card. £1 per title. By post 60p per title (s.a.e., please).
SPECIALITIES: Garland Rowlandson, Bridge, games of skill, etc.
BIBLIAGORA
1a Whitton Waye, Hounslow, Tw3 2LY
Credit-Card Desk 01-898 1234

Printed and published by Times Newspapers Limited at New Printing House Square, Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8EZ, England. Friday, August 27, 1976. Registered as a newspaper at the post office.